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LEGEND AND SYMBOL IN "DOCTOR ZHIVAGO"	5	*Edmund Wilson*
THE TWO CULTURES	17	*C. P. Snow*
GRANNIES IN THE WAINSCOT	25	*Laurie Lee*
MOSCOW NOTEBOOK	33	*Andrew Boyd*
PORTRAIT OF THE BEATNIK	42	*Caroline Freud*
AFTER THE REVOLUTION IN IRAQ	49	*Walter Z. Laqueur*
POETRY		
LAST POEMS	3	*Edwin Muir*
DANDY IN ELOFF STREET	16	*Alan Ross*
MIDNIGHT IS MADE OF BRICKS	32	*Jack Gilbert*
LIFE AND ART	46	*Michael Hamburger*
THE WHITSUN WEDDINGS	47	*Philip Larkin*
NOTES AND TOPICS		
A SECOND HOLLAND?	55	*G. F. Hudson*
ARGUING ABOUT TELEVISION	56	*Raymond Williams*
SWEET BIRD OF SUCCESS	59	*Robert Brustein*
BRECHT'S MISSING VERSE	60	*Martin Esslin*
AFRICA, BLACK AND WHITE	63	*John Hatch, Russell Warren Howe, Colin Legum*
THEATRE		
THE INTELLECTUAL ON THE AISLE	68	*Angus Wilson*
BOOKS		
THINKING WHAT WE ARE DOING	72	*W. H. Auden*
D'ANNUNZIO'S MYTHOMANIA	77	*Sylvia Sprigge*
THREE LIVES	80	*Max Beloff*
NEW NOVELS	83	*K. W. Gransden*
FROM THE OTHER SHORE	93	*F. R. Allemann*
LETTERS	86	
AUTHORS	96	

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Edwin Muir: Last Poems

The Day before the Last Day

If it could come to pass, and all kill all
And in a day or a week we could destroy
Ourselves, that is the beginning only
Of the destruction, for so we murder all
That ever has been, all species and forms,
Man and woman and child, beast and bird,
Tree, flower and herb, and that by which they were known,
Sight and hearing and touch, feeling and thought,
And memory of our friends among the dead.
If there were only a single ear that listening heard
A footstep coming nearer, it would bring
Annunciation of the world's resurrection.
A sound! We would not know even the silence
Where all was now as if it had never been.

Mechanical parody of the Judgment Day
That does not judge but only deals damnation.
Let us essay a hypothetical picture.

"All these and all alone in death's last day.
Before them stretches the indifferent ocean
Where no wave lifts its head and stagnant water
Lies spent against the shore. Yet as they wait
A wan light from the east falls on their faces
And they cannot bear the light, and hide in the ground,
Yet have no comfort there, for all are alone.
And there awaken the dark ancestral dreams.
They dream that the grave and the sea give up their dead
In wonder at the news of the death of death,
Hearing that death itself is balked by death.
And those who were drowned a year or a thousand years
Come out with staring eyes, foam on their faces,
And quaint sea-creatures fixed like jewelled worms
Upon their salt-white crowns, sea-tangle breasts,
That they, the once dead, might know the second death.
And then a stir and rumour break their dream,
As men and women at the point of death
Rise from their beds and clasp the ground in hope
Imploring sanctuary from grass and root
That never failed them yet and seemed immortal.
And women faint with child-birth lay their babes
Beside them on the earth and turn away

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And lovers two by two estranged for ever
Lie each in place without a parting look.
And the dying awakened know
That the generous do not try to help their neighbours,
Nor the feeble and greedy ask for succour,
Nor the fastidious complain of their company
Nor the ambitious dream of a great chance lost
Nor the preacher try to save one soul. For all
Think only of themselves and curse the faithless earth.
The sun rises above the sea, and they look and think:
'We shall not watch its setting'. And all get up
And stare at the sun. But they hear no great voice crying:
'There shall be no more time, nor death, nor change,
Nor fear, nor hope, nor longing, nor offence,
Nor need, nor shame'. But all are silent, thinking:
'Choose! Choose again, you who have chosen this!
Too late! Too late!'
And then: 'Where and by whom shall we be remembered?'"

Imaginary picture of a stationary fear.

I have been taught

I have been taught by dreams and fantasies
Learned from the friendly and the darker phantoms
And got great knowledge and courtesy from the dead
Kinsmen and kinswomen, ancestors and friends
But from two mainly
Who gave me birth.

Have learned and drunk from that unspending good
These founts whose learned windings keep
My feet from straying
To the deadly path

That leads into the sultry labyrinth
Where all is bright and the flare
Consumes and shrivels
The moist fruit.

And there dry at last time takes away
And taking leaves all things in their right place
An image of forever
One and whole.

And now that time grows shorter, I perceive
That Plato's is the truest poetry,
And that these shadows
Are cast by the true.

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Edmund Wilson

Legend and Symbol

in "Doctor Zhivago"

WHEN I wrote about Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* (in *The New Yorker* of November 15th), I was aware that the main theme of the book was death and resurrection, which was constantly turning up in the images, the situations, and the religious references, but I was only just becoming aware that the characters, all named—as was customary in Russia under the old régime—after saints of the Orthodox calendar, were partly to be understood in terms of the legends of these saints. The more one studies *Doctor Zhivago*, the more one comes to realise that it is studded with symbols and significant puns, that there is something in it of *Finnegan's Wake* and something of the cabbalistic *Zohar*, which discovers a whole system of hidden meanings in the text of the Hebrew Bible. This kind of thing, of course, is fashionable, and it is sometimes emphasised by critics at the expense of the more important aspects of some work of literature or discovered in works in which it does not exist; but poetic symbolism does really pervade *Zhivago*. It has been plotted and planned by the author; and from the moment one begins to get the sense of this, the story gains another dimension.

I have not re-read the book from this point of view, but Mrs. Lehovich and Miss Deming have done so, and have pointed out many implications which are likely to be missed by anyone who is reading it for the first time without knowing what to look for. I am very much indebted to the findings of these readers, which will in some cases be given in their own words.

THIS *article was written in collaboration with* BARBARA DEMING *and* EVGENIA LEHOVICH.—*E. W.*

I MENTIONED, when I reviewed *Zhivago*, that the name of the hero "almost corresponded" with the genitive and accusative singular of the adjective *zhivoy*, living: *zhivogo*. I did not know that the old Church Russian form was *zhivago*, and that the opening lines of the novel recall to the Russian reader certain passages from the Gospels and the prayer book. By means of a play on words, the main theme of death and resurrection is sounded in the second paragraph. The cortege of the funeral of Yury's mother is on its way to the cemetery. People ask, "Whom are they burying?" The answer is simply, "Zhivago."

At the beginning of the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke in the text of the Russian Bible, the scene in which the women come to the grave and find the stone rolled away, the angels ask them, *"Chto vy ishchete zhivago mezhdu mertvymi?"* "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

Two variations on this passage occur in the Russian liturgy: "Why do you think the living is among the dead? For God is arisen from the sepulchre"; and "Why seek ye the living among the dead? Why do you mourn the incorruptible amidst the corrupted?" The *g* in the accusative singular of *zhivoy* is ordinarily pronounced as *v*, but in the Biblical form as *g*, so the identification is complete.

THE Russian name Yury is a form of George, and a reference to the legend of St. George throws much light on the rôle of Zhivago, who

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specifically appears as the saint in the poem about slaying the dragon.

St. George is supposed to have died three times, and three times to have been resurrected, as happens with Yury on the three occasions when he feels himself going under and is revived by his half-brother Evgraf. But the parallel between the legend and the life of Zhivago seems to be further complicated by a parallel with Pasternak's own career. We find in the history of St. George—as recounted in Voragine's *Golden Legend*—that he put off "the habit of a knight" and "took that of a Christian man" as a result of the martyrdom of twenty-two thousand Christians, which caused some to renounce their faith, under Diocletian and Maximian—as Pasternak's interest in Christianity is said to date from 1936, when the great purges were getting under way; that for his persistence in preaching Christianity, he was subjected to a series of ordeals, beatings, drinkings of poison, slashings by sword-bristling wheels, and immersions in molten lead, from all of which he recovered; and that he was finally compelled to "make sacrifice to the idols"—as Pasternak, who is known in some cases to have refused to sign petitions for the death of Stalin's victims, is said on one or two occasions to have been forced to sign denunciations. St. George, when brought to his knees in submission to the pagan deities, stubbornly made his prayer to his own God, whereupon "fire descended from heaven and burnt the temple and the idols and their priests," and "the earth opened and swallowed all the cinders and ashes that were left." We now hear of an official called Dacian, "the provost," who is evidently Maximian himself, since Maximian came from Dacia and since we know that his wife, "Queen Alexandra," was attracted or converted to Christianity (as was also Diocletian's consort). This personage, according to Voragine, was so angry over the blasting of the temple that he exclaimed to his wife, "I shall die for anger if I may not surmount and overcome this man." "Then said she to him, 'Evil and cruel tyrant! Seest thou not the great virtue of the Christian people? I said to thee well that thou shouldst not do to them any harm, for their God fighteth for them, and know thou well that I will become Christian!' Then was Dacian much abashed and said to her: 'Wilt thou be Christian?' Then he took her by the hair and did beat her cruelly." Dacian now ordered George to be beheaded. Alexandra was also a martyr, and her day in the Orthodox calendar is the same as St. George's: April 23rd.

This story suggests two correspondences. There is the relation, on the one hand, between Larisa and her husband, General Strelnikov, who is carrying out the official line with a severity that turns into terrorism, and, on the other, between Larisa and Zhivago. But there is also a curious possible connection with the life of Pasternak himself.

The relations between Pasternak and Stalin are discussed in an article in the December issue of the Russian periodical *Novy Zhurnal*. The author, Mr. Mikhail Koryakov, shows that Pasternak, even in the dangerous years of 1936 and 1937, appeared at literary conferences and gave expression to independent non-official views. His opinions became so abhorrent that his speeches were no longer printed, and one can only get an idea of what they contained from the things that were said condemning them. Yet never in these years of suppression was Pasternak even arrested. Mr. Koryakov comes to the conclusion that there can be no explanation of this, at a time when almost every other Soviet writer of any talent or principle was imprisoned or exiled or shot, except that the word had been given by Stalin that Pasternak was not to be touched. But why, conceivably, should Stalin have protected him? Pasternak published in 1935 a volume of translations from the Georgian poets, but could this have been enough to exempt him? Mr. Koryakov believes that he has found out the reason:

IT IS CONNECTED with the death of N. S. Allilueva, Stalin's wife. Those who knew her say that she was beautiful. "She was elegant and had a good figure. She wore a simple dark blue dress with a white blouse," it is said of her in certain memoirs. "Her hair was combed back smooth with a straight part and a well-arranged knot at the back. She had a natural refinement of manner. Her hands were especially beautiful—one's glance involuntarily lingered on them. It is only in Bryulov's portraits that one can see hands of such classic shape."... There is no doubt that Stalin loved her very much. There are various stories of how she died: one is that Stalin shot her; another that she killed herself; while the official version has it that she died from peritonitis. And there is also the story that the peritonitis had been brought on by a serious wound in the abdomen, and that the shot had occurred at the moment when Stalin was wrest-

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ing the revolver from her.* It is a fixed rule of the Soviet papers that they never give any publicity to anything that happens in the family of a "party or government leader." But when N. S. Allilueva died, the papers were full of letters and telegrams expressing sympathy for Stalin. Among these was a letter from the Soviet writers, and this of course was an organised affair, as all such expressions of sympathy were. It was signed by thirty-three writers, who included B. Pilnyak, M. Koltsov, S. Dinamov, A. Selivanovsky, L. Averbach, all of whom were to perish in the Yezhov terror. The letter was routine and vulgar, as all such letters were:

> Dear Comrade Stalin!
> It is difficult to find the right words of condolence. Please accept our grief at the death of N. S. Allilueva, who devoted all her strength to the effort of freeing the millions of oppressed humanity, that effort of which you are the leader and for which we are ready to give our lives in affirmation of its indestructible vital force.

Boris Pasternak was not among these thirty-three writers. Though the letter was brought him, he had refused to sign it. The proof of this is that just below the letter, as printed in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of November 17th, 1932, appears a special postscript by Pasternak, in which he says that he has read the letter, but that rather than sign it, he has added a postscript. Here it is, enigmatic and striking:

> I associate myself with the feeling of my comrades. I had been thinking, the evening before, deeply and persistently of Stalin; for the first time from the point of view of the artist. In the morning I read the news. I was as shaken as if I had been present, as if I had lived it and seen it.
>
> *Boris Pasternak.*

Whatever were the circumstances of Allilueva's death, it was for Stalin a great misfortune. I heard in Moscow that he would often in the evening drive out to the Novodevichye Cemetery and for hours sit on her grave. It is possible that Pasternak's unconventional and rather mysterious postscript may, if not have shaken Stalin, at least have got under his skin. He could not, in the first place, have failed to be struck by the fact that Pasternak had refused to sign the banal routine letter and had expressed his feeling in his own words—which implied that he did have some feeling! And what did it mean: "I had been thinking, the evening before, deeply and persistently of Stalin," and "in the morning I heard the news"? What mysticism, what "devilry" was this? Stalin was a rough man, but he was not without his "depths."... These lines might have set him brooding. And, furthermore, what did it mean that Pasternak, in November, 1932, had "deeply and persistently" thought of him—"for the first time from the point of view of the artist"? Did that mean as a prophet, as a clairvoyant—who might in some sense have "been present" at the moment of Allilueva's death and have "seen" how she died? May we not guess that Stalin had a cold shudder [literally, that ants ran over his body] when he read these lines of the poet? May we not guess that at that moment there was roused in him the traditional oriental tendency to see in the poet a "dervish"? We may remember what Pushkin said about this in his *Journey to Erzerum*: "Puschin gave me the title of poet. The Pasha folded his hands on his breast and bowed, after saying to me through an interpreter: 'That hour is blessed when we meet a poet. The poet is brother to the dervish. He has no country nor is he blessed with the things of this world; and while we, poor creatures that we are, are worrying about fame, about power, about riches, he stands on a basis of equality with the powerful of the earth, and the people bow down before him.'"

Did not Stalin see such a "dervish" in Pasternak?... If one did not have to bow before him, he at least deserved defence and protection.... I believe that, from that moment, from the 17th of November, 1932, Pasternak, without himself being aware of it, had entered into Stalin's personal life, had in some sense come to figure in his spiritual landscape, so that one could not touch Pasternak without personally affecting Stalin.

THESE, of course, are merely speculations, but in an article that followed Koryakov's in the *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*, Gleb Struve recalls that it had already been thought that "Pasternak had inspired Stalin with some mysterious fear," and he tells one version of the much-circulated story—supposed to date from about 1931—of Stalin's having called Pasternak on the telephone. The poet Osip Mandelstam had been arrested for a satirical epigram about Stalin, and Pasternak, on an appeal from Mandelstam's wife, had asked Buckarin to try to get him off. Stalin is supposed to have rung Pasternak up and asked him whether Mandelstam was a good poet, then to have ended by asking why Pasternak never came to see him.

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* The story I used to hear was that on some occasion when guests were present at dinner, Stalin kept flicking bread pellets at her, and that she afterwards went out and shot herself. There has also been current a legend—significant in this connection—that she defied Stalin's brutal policies by attempting to protect her friends.—*E. W.*

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Whatever the reason may have been for Pasternak's unique immunity, this immunity suggests the unexplained authority and the similar inviolability of Yury's half-brother Evgraf in the novel. Evgraf remains mysteriously free: he is always in a position to come to Yury's rescue and to the last he escapes the purges. I believe that Mrs. Lehovich has discovered the key to Evgraf and to his fairy-story relationship with Zhivago.

IT SEEMS fairly clear [she writes] that Yury Zhivago represents the thinking and idealistic part of Russian society before and after the revolution, which included members of the upper and middle classes, intellectuals and students, merchants and professional people, whose striving for justice and freedom expressed itself in the most varied ways. One might say that Yury was a composite of all the characters who had influenced his childhood and youth, notably of his uncle Nikolai Nikolayevich, a religious philosopher "who was a free man... who had a nobleman's feeling of equality with all the living"; of his future father-in-law Alexander Gromeko, a chemistry professor and an enlightened member of a good Moscow family ("We Gromekos outgrew the passion of covetousness a generation ago"); of his friends and contemporaries: the student Misha Gordon, who is interested in philosophy, theology, and philology, and Tonya, who appears as the embodiment of the positive traditional values in these people's way of life.

One half of Doctor Zhivago is all these people. He is Yury-George, the idealistic but still down-to-earth man who, at one point in the book, accepts with such joy the simplicity of living by the labour of his hands: "What happiness to work for oneself and one's family from sunrise to sunset, building a home, cultivating the earth." In the Church calendar, the name George means "cultivator" [Greek: *georgos*, farmer]. The other half of Doctor Zhivago, the element that makes him unique among all these "men of good will," that saves him as an individual, is embodied in the person of Evgraf.

Evgraf is Yury's *alter ego*, his creative, his poetic self. What are Evgraf's characteristics? He has just come, on his first appearance, from his birthplace or home in Siberia, to which he subsequently returns several times. Siberia seems in general, in the novel, to figure less as an actual locality than as an expression for "lying low" or "going underground," a place to which the various characters withdraw when they have to leave the centre of events. (Larisa "goes to Siberia" after the revolutionary outbreaks die down in 1911, and again after the Bolshevik coup, as do Yury Zhivago and his family when, later on, conditions in Moscow become impossible, etc.)

Whenever Evgraf appears, he seems—like inspiration—to descend upon Yury from some higher realm. The first time that Yury sees him is at the moment when he (Yury) is reading the news of the Bolshevik insurrection in the entrance hall of the strange house in Moscow.* "He heard footsteps overhead. Someone was coming downstairs." When Evgraf turns up in Varykino, Yury writes in his journal: "And there, as if fallen from the clouds, appeared brother Evgraf." In the concluding chapter, Yury meets Evgraf in the street: "As usual, he seemed to have landed out of the sky." Evgraf, thus, arrives unexpectedly, nobody knows from whence, but always from somewhere above, and when he has given his helping hand, he vanishes. Is it possible for an artist to understand whence or how his creative genius comes?

"Strange," writes Yury, "he is my half-brother and bears the same name as I, and yet I know less about him than I do about anyone else."

The advent of Evgraf, however, may apparently be invoked by writing of a more prosaic kind. It is when Yury has started giving vent to his gloom in his notes called *Playing at Being People*, in Moscow, and afterwards, in Varykino, when he is writing his journal, that Evgraf makes his first two appearances.

Evgraf comes into Yury's life at precisely those times when ordinary living is becoming too hard to bear and when the effort of the struggle to survive is threatening to overwhelm him. He is able to help Yury materially by providing food, leisure, an apartment; and, what is more important, he saves Yury as a human being by making it possible for him to escape into, to right himself by, creative work. Thus, just before Yury's illness, when Evgraf will come to his rescue, the hardships of the Zhivagos have reached a peak. All their thoughts have been concentrated on

* The period of Russian poetry preceding the revolution, that of the Symbolist poets, of whom Blok is the greatest, is called *Serebryany Vek*, the Silver Period. The house in which Yury meets Evegraf stands at the corner of Serebryany and Molchanovka Streets. We can guess which period of Russian literature is represented by Molchanovka, the Street of Silence.—*E. L.*

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procuring the bare necessities of life, and Yury is "walking home along the endless stretches of Meshchanskaya Street"* when he feels himself coming down with typhus. Later on, when they are living in Varykino and all Yury's energy is being expended on the tasks of keeping his house heated and his family fed, he wishes that he could find time to write. "The nightingale's song 'Wake up! Wake up!' sounded almost like the pre-Easter prayer: 'Arise my soul, cease slumbering, awaken.'" Evgraf arrives at this moment (as Yury notes in his journal) and promises "to facilitate our household duties so that Tonya would have time to see to Shura's education, and I should have time for my medical and literary work." Finally, at the end of the book, Yury, who has been finding the air of Moscow more and more difficult to breathe, is "seeking to change his fate"; and Evgraf, who has descended again, "bypassing the minor obstacles of living... conceived a practical plan for helping his brother and saving him. The disappearance and seclusion of Yury Andreyevich were Evgraf's idea and invention."

But Evgraf's most important function is actually helping Yury to write. It is surely not a coincidence that the name Evgraf in the Russian calendar means "writer" [Greek: *eugraphos*]. Yury's and Evgraf's collaboration is described at the time of Yury's illness in Moscow when, in the course of his delirious dreaming:

> Tonya brings the glowing, penetrating, orange light of the lamp closer to him.... Work becomes possible. He is writing feverishly and with extraordinary felicity that which he should have written long ago but never could. And now it all comes out perfectly. He was distracted only from time to time by that boy with the slanting Tartar eyes and the Siberian coat of deerskin. Quite obviously that boy is the spirit of death, even simply his death. But how can he be that if he is helping him to write a poem? Can death be useful, can it help?

And further on: "I must awaken. I must awaken and arise. I must be resurrected." Has not Yury given the answer already at an earlier point in the story when he is musing in the cemetery after Anna Ivanovna's funeral?:

> Now as never before it was clear to him that art is always, incessantly occupied with two matters. It is constantly meditating on death and, in doing so, constantly creating life.

That Evgraf is Yury's creative genius is made even clearer by the description of their final meeting:

> His brother's support lent wings to Yury Andreyevich. Now, as always before, the secret of his power remained unexplained. Yury Andreyevich did not attempt to penetrate it.

When Zhivago is dead and his family and friends are gathered in the room where he lies, two people, Evgraf and Larisa, stand out from all the rest:

> They did not claim any closer tie with the dead man than the others.... Their composure was remarkable, and it produced a strange impression, as if they were involved not only in the funeral but also in the death....

These two, though immortal, *were* Yury. One was his creative genius, the other the life-giving force which for a time he had made his own.

THIS brings us to the question of Larisa: who she is, what she represents.

I had noted, when I reviewed the book, that she sometimes has an aspect of Mary Magdalene and that she is often associated with the sea, but I had not yet grasped the significance of this latter association. I have learned since from the Orthodox calendar that Larisa means *sea gull, sea bird*; from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that the shrine of St. George was built near the legendary scene of the rescue of Andromeda from the sea-monster by Perseus, and that the slaying by St. George of the dragon is supposed to have been derived from this. A letter from a correspondent has added the information that the worship of St. George on the coast of Lebanon is connected with temples to Poseidon. Now, a pre-Christian mythological Larissa is supposed to have been the wife of Poseidon. But why is the Larisa (Lara) of the novel identified with the sea?

Miss Deming, in clearing this up, has brought out what is seen at once to be one of the main poetic themes of *Zhivago*.

IS LARA [she writes] not associated with the sea because it is an image of the free, the spontaneous—the truly alive? Zhivago says, "Life is not... a substantial thing. It is something that eternally renews itself" (which might also describe the sea). He speaks of the "sea

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* *Meshchansky, meshchanskaya*—pertaining to *meshchane*, the poorest class of townsfolk—is an expression commonly used to describe a particularly small and prosaic way of life or point of view.—*E. L.*

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of life, the sea of spontaneity." On page 391 [of the English translation], Zhivago asks himself:

> What was she (Lara) to him? . . . Oh, that question he could always answer. . . . Oh, how sweet to be alive! . . . Oh, the ever-present longing to thank life, thank existence itself, to thank them as one being to another being. This was exactly what Lara was. You could not communicate with life and existence, but *she was their representative, their expression*, in her the inarticulate principle of existence became sensitive and capable of speech." (Italics B. D.)

Is Lara not also associated with the sea—and I would add with wind—because it is "life's storm" that casts Lara and Zhivago together? Zhivago does not choose Lara, he says; does not prefer her to Tonya, his wife. "Ineluctable reality" joins them:

> *In years of hardship, in the days*
> *Of an unthinkable existence*
> *She had been cast up from the depths*
> *By a high wave of destiny.*
>
> (Parting)

Lara is associated with the sea—and with wind—in the following passages:

On pages 150–51, in the middle of a stormy night, after she has left Melyuzeyevo, there is a knocking at the door of the house where she has been staying, and both Zhivago and Mlle. Fleury go downstairs, hoping to find Lara, who has for some reason returned. There is no one at the door. A gust of wind showers them with cold raindrops. They find that a branch knocking on a window has broken a pane, and there are huge puddles on the floor—"and the same thing in what used to be Lara's room—there was a sea, a real sea, an ocean." They go back to their beds, but both continue to imagine Lara outside the house "in the form of a watery wraith." On page 304, Zhivago, living in anticipation through a meeting with Lara, dreams that: "A dark muffled figure will open the door, and the promise of her nearness, unowned by anyone in the world . . . will reach him like the first wave of the sea as you run down over the sandy beach in the dark." And on page 452, after he and Lara have been separated, Zhivago muses:

> I'll trace your features on paper, as the sea, after a fearful storm has churned it up, traces the form of the greatest, farthest-reaching wave on the sand. Seaweed, shells, cork, pebbles, the lightest, most imponderable things that it could lift from its bed, are cast up in a broken, sinuous line on the sand. This line, endlessly stretching into the distance, is the frontier of the highest tide. That was how life's storm cast you up on my shore, O my pride. . . .

One could also note that when Zhivago first vists her, in Yuryatin, he finds her drawing water from the well. It is again very windy.

I suggest, then, that the sea represents for Pasternak the principle of life itself, which is indicated by the name Zhivago. One finds that Yury himself is associated by Pasternak with water imagery. On pages 89–90, at Anna Ivanovna's funeral, he walks on alone, ahead of the other mourners, and,

> In answer to the desolation brought by death to the people slowly pacing after him, he was drawn, as irresistibly as water funnelling downward, to dream, to think, to work out new forms, to bring beauty into being. Now, as never before, it was clear to him that art is always, ceaselessly occupied with two matters. It is constantly meditating on death and, in doing so, constantly creating life.

On page 502, when Lara takes leave of him in his coffin, she addresses him, "Farewell, my great one, my kin, farewell my pride, farewell, my swift deep little river, how I loved your day-long splashing, how I loved to plunge into your cold waves." The association of Zhivago with a river is followed here by the association of Lara with rain: her tears "seemed to hold her words together in a tender, quick whispering like the rustling of silky leaves in a warm, windy rain." Lara and Zhivago are cast together because they are kin—water flowing to water.

On page 229, Pasternak describes a stream bed, tucked up in the snow like a child in its cot, which in spring will rush down to the viaduct below. Both Lara and Zhivago, like water under snow, persist through the winter of the period, remain alive in an exceptional sense, while so many others "play" at being people, give up "the habit of thinking and judging for themselves," "idiotically pompous with each other." Lara's "greatest defeat in life" is in her marriage with Pasha, when she, too, succumbs to the general pomposity, fails to be natural with him. But in the main, both Lara and Zhivago, heroically, and with each other's help, remain free individuals—manage not to lose the "immortal part" of themselves.

•

THE large theme of *Doctor Zhivago* is death and resurrection, and the image of the sea is a part of this. On page 12, Pasternak speaks of the freedom resulting

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> from the feeling that all human lives . . . *flowed into each other* (italics B. D.)—a happy feeling that all events took place not only on earth, in which the dead are buried, but also in some other region which some called the Kingdom of God, others history, and still others by some other name.

In the passage in which Lara says farewell to Zhivago, she loses all feeling of helplessness in death's presence, musing on the fact that their joyful sense of being part of a greater whole is just what had always united her with Zhivago. She feels suddenly as if she has lived twenty lives, lost Zhivago countless times (feels their lives flow into the "general stream of life"). "Communion with others is immortal," Nikolai says. (In the final chapter, Zhivago's life and his words flow into the lives of Dudorov and Gordon—reclaiming them from the dead, from those who merely "play at being people.") The sea, then, for Pasternak, is the sea of life—and, one could add, of immortality, "a stronger word for life."

Imagery of the sea or of water appears in a few further connections. There is, for example, the passage (page 437) in which Zhivago feels the approach of inspiration, and language itself begins to think and speak for him, its inward flow, "like the current of a mighty river polishing stones and turning wheels by its very movement," creating, in passing, meter and rhythm and countless other relationships. Here again it is really the "stream of general life" that is referred to, for

> at such moments Yury Andreyevich felt that the main part of the work was being done not by him but by a superior power which was above him and directed him, namely the movement of universal thought and poetry in its present historical stage and the one to come.

In his first "rash enthusiasm" about the revolution, Zhivago speaks of it in similar terms (page 146): "Everyone was revived, reborn, changed, transformed. . . . It seems to me that socialism is the sea, and all these separate streams, these private individual revolutions, are flowing into it—the sea of life, the sea of spontaneity." Later, of course, his charge against the revolutionaries is precisely that they deny to life its true quality —try to treat it as a substance that can be moulded.

There is still another passage that is important to mention: the beautiful section in which Pasternak describes the thaw and the spring floods in the mountains, when all the various waters rush out with a roar and spread themselves, and rain leaps from clouds—and then four prisoners escape from the train. As Zhivago says, "They just broke free like the water" (page 238). One has the feeling that the floods have actually prompted the escape of the prisoners. Throughout the book, Pasternak notes the power of nature to communicate to human beings the impulse towards freedom, towards rebirth. (It is, for example, a sudden storm, sweeping the smell of rain into the school-room where she sits, sending the papers flying about, that rouses Lara to her decision to escape from Komarovsky—page 72.) Those who are truly alive, in Pasternak's eyes, feel themselves part of the "general stream of life" (see the poem *Dawn*: "I feel I'm melting, even as the snow melts . . .").

Mrs. Lehovich agrees with this and points out that the name of Yury's second wife, Marina, also suggests the sea. She suggests that the fluidity of Larisa has a specific political aspect, which has been carefully worked out by Pasternak and which constitutes a part of his interpretation of the events of the Revolution.

> The idea [Mrs. Lehovich writes] represented by the heroine Larisa is the most elusive in the whole book, although it is perhaps the one for which we are given the largest number of clues of different kinds and at different levels.
>
> In the Russian Orthodox calendar many names are given a definite meaning. Larisa is supposed to mean *sea gull*, and this evokes two expressions frequently used in Russian: "free as a bird" and "boundless as the sea." Larisa has her own climate, a rather windy one. Her appearances are heralded by an abundance of fresh air and a feeling of spaciousness—

> The flower-scented air of these open spaces . . . was dearer to her than her father and mother, better than a lover, wiser than a book.
>
> When she entered it was as if a window were flung open. The room filled with light and air.

When Larisa is far away, a muggy, depressing atmosphere often prevails, and never more so than when freedom has fallen to its lowest ebb. There is something elemental about Larisa.

Larisa is not of Russian but Western European origin, being the daughter of a Belgian and a Frenchwoman. Throughout the book she

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never says anything that sounds remotely patriotic or speaks the word "Russia." With these few observations in mind, we may attempt to find out something more about Larisa by following her progress through the first part of the book. Since her appearances seem to coincide with political events, it seems necessary here to review as briefly as possible Russian history from the autumn of 1905 to the winter of 1911.

The shock of the Russian defeats in the disastrous Russo-Japanese War was utilised by the radical parties of opposition to precipitate a revolutionary movement in Russia. This took the form of political assassinations, peasant uprisings and general strikes, notably the *railroad strike of October 20th, 1905*. As a result of this, certain concessions had to be granted by the Tsar, including the replacement of ultra-reactionary ministers by Count Witte and the promise (*made in August 1905*) to convoke a national assembly—the Duma. On *October 30th, 1905*, an imperial manifesto was issued promising wide reforms and a wide extension of the franchise for the new Duma, and giving the latter considerable legislative and controlling powers. Despite the publication of this manifesto, revolutionary activities continued, culminating in the Kronstadt rebellion and the Moscow uprising (*December 22nd, 1905, to January 1st, 1906*). At the same time, reactionary forces became more organised and active, utilising the army and police for ruthless suppressions of revolutionary activities. It was in this atmosphere that the first Duma was elected. Both reactionaries and revolutionaries were discredited in public opinion. In March, 1906, the major part of the liberties granted by the manifesto of October 30th were withdrawn, and the Duma reduced to an advisory rôle. This arbitrary action on the part of the government was a crushing blow to all those who had hoped to see the transformation of Russia into a liberal and democratic state. In July, 1906, Stolypin, a forceful and energetic statesman, was appointed prime minister. Though his period of office was far from peaceful and was marked by harsh measures, he succeeded in restoring order, reducing revolutionary violence, and initiating a series of reforms which, had he been able to complete them, would have removed much of the ground from under the revolutionaries' feet. Stolypin was assassinated in September, 1911.

"The war with Japan was not yet over.... Great waves of revolution were washing over Russia" when Larisa arrives in Moscow from the Urals. The Guishars first stay at a hotel situated in the most sordid section of Moscow, then settle down in the vicinity of the Brest railroad and the houses occupied by its workers.

Larisa's next appearance is in mid-July, 1905, after a wild evening spent with Komarovsky. (In August, 1905, the Tsar discharged his reactionary ministers and promised to convoke the Duma.) In the fall, Larisa's neighbours and friends taken active part in the railroad strike (October 20, 1905), and, on returning home a few days later, one of them, Tiverzin, hears from his mother the news of the manifesto of October 17th. (This is, of course, the historic manifesto of October 30th, the Russian Gregorian calendar being thirteen days behind the Julian.) In the course of that winter, Larisa is seduced by Komarovsky. "Days and weeks passed"; "Oh, what a vicious circle it was." And in history, too, there was a vicious circle of revolutionary violence and reactionary reprisals that finally brought on the Moscow insurrection of December 22nd. Larisa's home is right next to the barricades; her future husband Antipov is one of "the good honest boys" whom she sees mixing with the insurgents. There is a wonderful description of her at that time: "Lara walked swiftly. Some force was carrying her forward as if she were walking on air; a proud, inspiring force." Later in December, when the insurrection is dying out, Yury sees Larisa for the first time at the hotel after her mother's attempted suicide. Larisa is asleep, "she must have been deathly tired." "And that force was now before Yury's eyes, concrete as well as vague and dreamlike, mercilessly destructive and plaintive, and calling for help."

In the spring of 1906, "six months with Komarovsky overflowed the cup of Lara's patience." (Roughly six months had passed since the October 30th manifesto, both reactionaries and revolutionaries were discredited, and in March the major part of the liberties granted by the manifesto were withdrawn.) That spring Larisa "came to a decision which was to alter the course of her life for several years to come." She accepted the position of tutor to the daughter of the fabulously rich merchant and promoter, Kologrivov, whose sympathies with the revolutionary movement were so well known that he was jokingly said to "subsidise the revolution." In subsequent years, Kologrivov came several times to Larisa's assistance and gave her large sums of money and a diamond necklace for her wedding.

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In Kologrivov Pasternak embodies the figures of some of Russia's millionaire merchants who, incongruously, supported the revolutionary movement. Moscow's millionaire industrialist, Sava Morozov, through his employee, the engineer Krasin, a close follower of Lenin, had been contributing two thousand roubles ($1,000) a month to the Bolshevik faction, from early 1904 until his suicide at Cannes in 1905. (Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution.*) Another millionaire merchant, Victor Tikhomirov, "having received his inheritance, one fine day dropped in on Vladimir Ilyich [Lenin] to offer him one hundred thousand roubles for the purpose of founding a legal Bolshevik daily" (Wolfe).

While living at the Kologrivovs', Larisa sends money to the exiled revolutionary, Antipov, and anonymously helps his young son, Pasha, who is to become her future husband. In the summer of 1911, Larisa leaves the Kologrivovs. The falsity of her position there and her financial dependence have been weighing upon her heavily.

At a Christmas party in 1911, Larisa attempts to shoot Komarovsky, but by mistake wounds the assistant attorney-general of Moscow. She lies feverish and half-conscious after the shooting. "How restless she is, how constantly she revolts and rebels in an effort to alter her destiny in her own way and to begin life anew!" Komarovsky thinks at this time. That spring Larisa makes up her mind to marry Pasha, whom, earlier in the book, she had considered "her last defence," and leaves with him for Siberia, where she is to remain for the next five years.

By an isolated act of terrorism, Russia's prime minister Stolypin was assassinated in September, 1911. The revolutionary movement, which he succeeded in suppressing, did not emerge again until 1917.

Larisa reappears in European Russia in 1917. She is a nurse in the Russian army at the time when military defeats have demoralised it and revolutionary propaganda is preparing it for the March, 1917, events. An episode at the front is described in which Larisa, Dr. Zhivago, his Jewish friend, Gordon, the little Tartar apprentice Galiullin, now an officer, and his father, the former janitor Gimazetdin, mortally wounded, all converge at the front, at a first-aid station, but do not recognise or even encounter one another. The passage seems to make the point that the war with its hardships, by bringing together the various classes and races of the Russian nation, could have helped to promote understanding among them but that this did not occur.

Larisa's meeting with Yury at an army hospital coincides with "strange rumours from Imperial Headquarters and disquieting news from the interior." Galiullin, also a patient, reminds Larisa, a few days later, of Moscow in 1905—"Oh, how sharply she felt it all again!"—and on that same day the news from Petersburg of the Revolution there reaches the hospital ward.

In the early days of the revolution, we see Larisa and Yury together in Melyuseyevo. Here he tries to tell her that he loves her; she shuts him off, and soon leaves for Moscow. This is just before the Bolshevik Revolution of October, 1917. She stays in Moscow a few days only, then departs once more for Siberia.

WHO is Larisa, then, in the light of the political events with which the author seems to have synchonised her appearances?

Much later, in Yuryatin, after Larisa has departed with Komarovsky, Yury, who has been mourning the loss of her, also "mourns that faraway summer in Melyuseyevo in the days when the revolution had been God descended on earth." Does Larisa personify the Revolution? This can hardly be possible, for in that case she would have remained in the centre of events after October, 1917, and in the years that followed, when revolution swept the capital and the country, and she does not do this but withdraws and conceals herself in a remote Siberian town. This identification, also, seems too simple, and Larisa is not at all simple. The point here is probably that Larisa represents the spirit of freedom (the ideas of liberty, freedom, and franchise are all contained in the Russian word *svoboda*), and that once the new system has been got under way, she prefers to be free of that, too. But Larisa's exact meaning will always escape us; she will assume different aspects as the novel unfolds, though her image will remain constant and her direction, under changing conditions, will always remain the same.

IT SHOULD also be noted [E. W. writing] that the Larisa of the novel has obviously some connection with Pasternak's admiration for Larisa Reisner, a writer and Socialist worker of the early days of the Revolution. Here is a brief account of her career from a German anthology of Russian short stories—*Dreissig Neue Erzähler des Neuen Russland*—published in 1929:

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Larisa Reisner was born in Lublin in 1895, the daughter of a professor. Her early years were spent in France and Germany, where her father had gone to study. In Western Europe he became a Socialist, and it was possible for him to return to Russia only after the 1905 revolution. At the Gymnasium Larisa wrote her first play. In 1914, after the outbreak of war, she founded, together with her father, a magazine called *Rudin*, to fight against the betrayal of international solidarity. As soon as the February revolution broke out, she began to be active in the workers' clubs, took part in the appropriation of art treasures, joined the Communist Party, and went to the front. In 1919, she was staff commissar of the Baltic fleet. In 1920 she became the wife of Raskolnikov, the Soviet envoy to Kabul. She was in Germany in 1923, soon after the Cuno strike, at the time of the Hamburg uprising. On returning to the Soviet Union, she travelled as a reporter through the great industrial regions. At the same time, she studied economics and revolutionary history, and lectured. She died of typhus in 1926.

Pasternak's poem about Larisa Reisner, written at the time of her death—*In Memory of Reisner*—is almost an apotheosis. She is presented, like the Larisa of the novel, in association with water imagery: the floodings of spring thaw, the boilings of life in a still..

(An article by Mr. Yury Bol'shukhin in the *Nove Russkoe Slovo* supplies some further details: Larisa Reisner was a Trotskyite: her husband has been described as having a character like that of Saint-Just, and he was purged in the 'thirties during the Stalin terror.)

"Moreau and Vetchinkin. *Seeders. Threshers.*" This sign appears five times in *Doctor Zhivago*, when Yury either sees it or thinks of it.

I was puzzled by it when I first read the book, but assumed that it merely stood for the eternal problem of agriculture that has pressed upon the new Russia as it did upon the old. I believe that this is one of its meanings, but I recognised later that the seeders and threshers contained the death and resurrection motif. Miss Deming pointed out to me further that since the sign makes its final appearance (page 305) at the branch of the road through the forest at the time when Zhivago is unable to decide between his wife and Larisa, and just at the moment when he is about to be kidnapped by the partisans and saved from making this choice by being thrust into a life of action, the persistently recurring billboard must have some connection with the crisis. Mrs. Lehovich reminded me that *vetchina* means ham, and that *vetchinka* would be its diminutive, *hamlet*, and suggested that the sign might be somehow related to the Hamlet of the first poem of the last chapter. This Hamlet—who, in the language of Jesus in *Mark 14.36*, begs that his cup may pass—has been called to play a rôle in the drama of his age, but knows, in his solitude and darkness, that he is cast for another play, his own. For Yury it is equally impossible to escape from the Revolution or to follow the clear line of his will, which itself, between Larisa and Tonya, is balked by a bifurcation. The partisans drag him off to take part in their eager campaigning, which is entirely irrelevant to his purposes, and to preach to him their infantile bigotry, which can only exasperate and bore him. The most striking thing that met his eye on his first arrival at Yuryatin had been a great trail of smoke from "the giant illusion," which was burning down. (This is another of Pasternak's plays on words that do not come out in English: in the early days of the cinema, moving picture houses were sometimes called "illusions," as shows with magicians and freaks had been. The Russian phrase here is *"illyuzion Gigant."*).

The freedom represented by Larisa is no longer, by the time he refinds her there, identified with the Revolution. And yet Yury, in his service with the partisans, will shoot, in a senseless and compulsive way, a young officer of the Whites, just as Hamlet kills Polonius and Laertes. When at last he escapes from the partisans, and Tonya has got away to Paris, and there is no longer any obstacle to his living with Larisa, he passes by the signboard again on his way to Varykino with her, but though he looks for it, it is now too dark to see it: there is now, in the darkness of the terror from which he and Larisa are fleeing, no longer any problem of choosing. Later on, just before his death, when Evgraf has again intervened to give him an interval of freedom from his family life with Marina, and he is trying to bring some literary order into the confused materials supplied by his past, in the moments when "his imagination failed and he could not get on with his work," he would draw branching roads in his margins, with the Moreau and Vetchinkin sign, and also intersections of city streets, like the one at which he had first read the news of the success of the Bolshevik *coup d'état*, just before the first descent of Evgraf was to lead him to take the right turning.

If, bearing all this in mind, we now scrutinise

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the obsessive billboard, we find that in its French form the name Moreau is compounded of *mort* and *eau*, death and water, and that in its Russian form, Moro, it suggests the word *mor*, pestilence (the typhus which Yury comes down with in the winter of the Bolshevik Revolution?), which is the root of the verb *morit'*, to exterminate, starve, or exhaust, as well as the word *more*, sea. With these references on his left, and on his right the seeders and threshers, Yury's Hamlet, in great embarrassment, finds himself—"to be or not to be?"—solicited both by life and by death, which, however, like the buried seed, like the compact ambiguity of the word *Moreau*, embody a single process: the indestructible continuity of life.

THIS sign with its prism of meanings is very much in the manner of Joyce, and it seems clear that Pasternak has been influenced by *Finnegan's Wake*.

Zhivago, the "living man," is simultaneously Hamlet, St. George, and Jesus, just as H. C. Earwicker, "Here Comes Everybody," is Adam, Tristram, Finnegan, etc., and he is also, just as Earwicker is split in two as the brothers Shem and Shaun, divided into the two personalities of the half-brothers, Evgraf and Yury. Larisa—the feminine principle, as is shown by what her name has in common with Marina's—is given, like Anna Livia, the essence of the liquid element. As Anna Livia, at the end of *Finnegan's Wake*, is flowing away from her household and slipping out to her father, the sea, leaving her daughter to flow in her stead, so Larisa eludes those who love her: Pasha, Yury, Komarovsky, and leaves her daughters: one by Antipov, who is studying for the protean profession of actress, and one by Yury, who also seeks freedom and has been proving elusive, too.

Such a method on the part of a novelist may, of course, when detected by his commentators, give rise to a certain amount of nonsense. One can hardly, for example, accept all the conjectures of Mr. Mikhail Koryakov, the author of the article quoted earlier on the relations between Pasternak and Stalin. Mr. Koryakov, in another article, in the *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* of February 8th, has tried to show that Yury's competence as an oculist—which is never, as Mr. Koryakov notes, mentioned after his graduation from medical school—is picked up towards the end of the book when Zhivago, on being told by Dudorov, who has served a term in jail, that he feels he is a better man for the brain-washing given him by the magistrate, has the melancholy impression of listening to a horse who is telling about breaking himself in. The breaking-in of a horse, Mr. Koryakov points out, implies the use of blinders, the partial suppression of the use of the eye, and he manages, by an argument I shall not trace, to discover in these two widely separated passages a "polemic with Mayakovsky."

YET parallels and symbols do exist in *Zhivago*. They are deliberate and very important: the whole story is organised around them, they lie at the centre of the meaning of the book, and once we have become aware of them, we see it composed as a harmony.

Certain critics who have made the objection that *Zhivago* is a social novel, conceived in an antiquated mode and not very well contrived, have completely missed the spirit and the shape of the book. These critics have been misled, I believe, by the English and American translations, which—partly, perhaps, inevitably, but to some extent unnecessarily—have eliminated so much of the poetry and ignored the significant emphases. *Doctor Zhivago* is not at all old-fashioned: in spite of some echoes of the Tolstoyan tone in certain of the military scenes, there is no point in comparing it with *War and Peace*. It is a modern poetic novel by a writer who has read Proust, Joyce, and Faulkner, and who, like Virginia Woolf or the Lawrence Durrell of the Alexandria series, has gone on from his predecessors to invent in this genre a variation of his own. We may early in our reading of the book come to see that the most salient incidents are intended to stand for something—as in the case of the masterly episode of the journey in the train with the deaf-mute, who figures the insulation from reality of a certain type of *exalté* in the first phrase of the Revolution. But we may still be disposed to wonder, at the beginning of one of the divisions of a chapter, why the author has chosen to describe at such length some aspect of the weather or the landscape or to concentrate upon some scene involving a set of characters to whom we have not yet been introduced and whom we do not expect to met again.

I am puzzled still by some of these passages. Why, for example, at the beginning of "The Highway," do we spend so much time in the merchant's house in the little Siberian village? That this opening has some special significance is shown by the fact that it is saturated, in a very Joycean way—I was quite unaware of this

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till Mrs. Lehovich called my attention to it—with ecclesiastical references: words, objects, colours, and sounds. (It is Holy Week, to be sure: death and resurrection again.) But in most cases it soon becomes clear that the apparently random description or scene is a metaphor for some moment of history, some facet of the social situation, some state of mind of the characters, which forms the real subject of the section.

And so, we come finally to realise, the whole book is an enormous metaphor for the author's vision of life. The personalities of Yury and Larisa stream back into wider reaches, a realm in which their contours and features are lost, in which they become indefinables, unclassifiable poetic elements that can only be conveyed by imagery; and it is not only the imagery of these metaphors but their rhythms of recurrence, their alienations, their confluences and interfusions that express the real sense of *Zhivago*.

Dandy in Eloff Street (Johannesburg)

With fawn fedora and a rolled umbrella,
Palm Beach suit and co-respondent shoes,
He eyes himself in dummy-grinning windows,
Smiling when his image in the plate-glass does.
Creases sharp as razors, but avoiding ladders,
He prowls up Eloff on a short-term shadow.
His teeth are gleaming and his tie is yellow.
(The outer man on show, the inner one lies fallow).

Arrogant in his fancies, building castles
In the air, he scrutinises finger nails and whistles
Softly to himself (as if all that matters
Is precisely how much cuff exceeds the sleeve).
Yet, behind smoked lens, his bloodshot eyes are eagles,
Swooping insults up from looks of alleged betters.
His nostrils sniff out scorn, and, flaring, leave
A trail of wounded self-love like a spoor.

Chest puffed out, a nylon pigeon, his lips are bugles
Blowing fanfares of his pride from door to door.
Yet, salesman of himself in imaginary encounters,
Randy dandy on the loose from rancid shanties,
He wears out self-respect, overdrawing on instalments,
Spiritually bankrupt, though a strolling millionaire.
At home, the suit hangs up, still bluffing its contentment.
Below, its owner sags: the dandy is up there.

Alan Ross

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C. P. Snow

The Two Cultures
and the Scientific Revolution

THE problem which has been on my mind for some time is one I cannot avoid just because of the circumstances of my life. The only credentials I have to ruminate on the subject at all come through those circumstances, through nothing more than a set of chances. Anyone with similar experience would have seen much the same things and I think make very much the same comments about them. It just happens to be an unusual experience. By training I was a scientist: by vocation I was a writer. That was all. It was a piece of luck, if you like, that arose through coming from a poor home.

But my personal history isn't the point now. All that I need say is that I went to Cambridge and did a bit of research there at a time of major scientific activity. I was privileged to have a ringside view of one of the most wonderful creative periods in all physics. And it happened through the flukes of war—including meeting W. L. Bragg in the buffet on Kettering station on a very cold morning in 1939, which had a determining influence on my practical life—that I was able, and indeed morally forced, to keep that ringside view ever since. So for thirty years I have had to be in touch with scientists not only out of curiosity, but as part of a working existence. During the same thirty years I was trying to shape the books I wanted to write, which in due course took me among writers.

It was through living among these groups and much more, I think, through moving regularly from one to the other and back again, that I got occupied with the problem of what I christened to myself as the "two cultures." For constantly I felt I was moving among two groups—comparable in intelligence, identical in race, not grossly different in social origin, earning about the same incomes, who had almost ceased to communicate at all, who in intellectual, moral, and psychological climate had so little in common that instead of going from Burlington House or South Kensington to Chelsea, one might have crossed an ocean.

In fact, one had travelled much further than across an ocean—because after a few thousand Atlantic miles, one found Greenwich Village talking precisely the same language as Chelsea, and both having about as much communication with M.I.T. as though the scientists spoke nothing but Tibetan. For this is not just our problem; owing to some of our educational and social idiosyncrasies, it is slightly exaggerated here, owing to another English social peculiarity it is slightly minimised; by and large this is a problem of the entire West.

I believe the intellectual life of the whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups. When I say the intellectual life, I mean to include also a large part of our practical life, because I should be the last person to suggest the two can at the deepest level be distinguished. Two polar groups: at one pole we have the literary intellectuals (who incidentally, while no one was looking, took to referring to themselves as "intellectuals" as though there were no others). I remember G. H. Hardy, the distinguished Cambridge mathematician, once remarking to me in mild puzzlement, "Have you noticed how the word *intellectual* is used nowadays? There seems to be a new definition which certainly doesn't include Rutherford or Eddington or Dirac or Adrian or me. It does seem rather odd. . . ."

Literary intellectuals at one pole—at the other

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scientists, and as the most representative, the physical scientists. Between the two, a gulf of mutual incomprehension—sometimes (particularly among the young) hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding. They have a curious distorted image of each other. Their attitudes are so different that, even on the level of emotion, they cannot find much common ground. Non-scientists tend to think of scientists as brash and boastful. They hear Mr. T. S. Eliot (who just for these illustrations we can take as an archetypal figure) saying about his attempts to revive verse-drama that we can hope for very little, but that he would feel content if he and his co-workers could prepare the ground for a new Kyd or a new Greene. That is the tone, restricted and constrained, with which literary intellectuals are at home: it is the subdued voice of their culture. Then they hear a much louder voice, that of another archetypal figure, Rutherford, trumpeting: "This is the heroic age of science! This is the Elizabethan age!" Many of us heard that, and a good many other statements beside which that was mild; and we weren't left in any doubt whom Rutherford was casting for the rôle of Shakespeare. What is hard for the literary intellectuals to understand, imaginatively or intellectually, is that he was absolutely right.

And compare "this is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper"—incidentally, one of the least likely scientific prophecies ever made—with Rutherford's famous repartee, "Lucky fellow, Rutherford, always on the crest of the wave." "Well, I made the wave, didn't I?"

The non-scientists have a rooted impression that the scientists are shallowly optimistic, unaware of man's condition. On the other hand, the scientists believe that the literary intellectuals are totally lacking in foresight, peculiarly unconcerned with their brother men, in a deep sense anti-intellectual, anxious to restrict both art and thought to the existential moment. Anyone with a mild talent for invective could produce plenty of this kind of subterranean backchat. On each side there is some of it which is not entirely baseless. It is all destructive. Much of it rests on misinterpretations which are dangerous, and I would like to deal with two of the most profound of these.

First, about the scientist's "optimism." This is an accusation which has been made so often that it has become a platitude; it has been made by some of the acutest non-scientific minds of the day; but it depends upon a confusion between the individual experience and the social experience, between the individual condition of man and his social condition. Most of the scientists I have known well have felt—just as deeply as the non-scientists I have known well—that the individual condition of each of us is tragic. Each of us is alone: sometimes we escape from solitariness, through love or affection or perhaps creative moments, but those triumphs of life are pools of light we make for ourselves while the edge of the road is black: each of us dies alone. Some scientists I have known have had faith in revealed religion. Perhaps with them the sense of the tragic condition is not so strong. I don't know. With most people of deep feeling, however high-spirited and happy they are, sometimes most with those who are happiest and most high-spirited, it seems to be right in the fibres, part of the weight of life. That is as true of the scientists I have known as of anyone at all.

But nearly all of them—and this is where the colour of hope genuinely comes in—would see no reason why, just because the individual condition is tragic, so must the social condition be. Each of us is solitary; each of us dies alone. All right, that's a fate against which we cannot struggle—but there is plenty in our condition which is not fate, and against which we are less than human unless we do struggle.

Most of our fellow human beings, for instance, are underfed and die before their time. In the crudest terms, *that* is the social condition. There is a moral trap which comes through the insight into man's loneliness: it tempts one to sit back, complacent in one's unique tragedy, and let the others go without a meal.

As a group, the scientists fall into that trap less than others. They are inclined to be impatient to see if something can be done; and inclined to think that it can be done, until it is proved otherwise. That is their real optimism, and it is an optimism that the rest of us badly need.

In reverse, the same spirit, tough and good and determined to fight it out at the side of their brother men, has made scientists regard the other culture's social attitudes as contemptible. That is too facile; some of them are, but they are a temporary phase and not to be taken as representative. I remember being cross-examined by a scientist of distinction.

"Why do most writers take on social opinions

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which would have been thought distinctly uncivilised and démodé at the time of the Plantagenets? Wasn't that true of most of the influential 20th-century writers? Yeats, Pound, Wyndham Lewis, nine out of ten of those who have dominated literary sensibility in our time —weren't they not only politically silly, but politically wicked? Didn't the influence of all they represent bring Auschwitz that much nearer? . . ."

I thought at the time, and I still think, that the correct answer was not to defend the indefensible. It was no use saying that Yeats (according to friends whose judgment I trust) was a man of singular magnanimity of character, as well as a great poet. It was no use denying the facts, which are broadly true. The honest answer was that there is, in fact, a connection, which literary persons were culpably slow to see, between some kinds of early 20th-century art and the most imbecile expressions of anti-social feeling. That was one reason, among many, why some of us turned our backs on the arts and tried to hack out a new, or different, way for ourselves.

But though many of those writers dominated literary sensibility for a generation, that is no longer so, or at least to nothing like the same extent. Literature changes more slowly than science. It hasn't the same automatic corrective, and so its misguided periods are longer. But it is ill-considered of scientists to judge writers on the evidence of the period 1914–50.

THOSE are two of the misunderstandings between my "two cultures." I have often discussed this, and I have often been challenged by non-scientists of strong down-to-earth interests. Their view is that it is an over-simplification, and that if one is going to talk in these terms there ought to be at least *three* cultures. They argue that, though they are not scientists themselves, they would share a good deal of the scientific feeling; they would have as little use (perhaps, since they knew more about it, even less use) for recent literary culture as the scientists themselves; they vigorously refuse to be associated with a climate which would not permit of social hope.

I respect those arguments. The number *two* is very dangerous: that is why the dialectic is a dangerous process; attempts to divide anything into *two* ought to be regarded with much suspicion. But for my purposes there is little real point going in for further refinements, and subtilising any more would only bring more disadvantages than it is worth.

At one pole, the scientific culture really is a culture, not only in an intellectual but also in an anthropological sense. Its members need not, and of course often do not, always completely understand each other; biologists more often than not will have a pretty hazy idea of contemporary physics; but there are common attitudes, common standards and patterns of behaviour, common approaches and assumptions. This goes surprisingly wide and deep, and it cuts across other mental patterns, such as those of religion or politics or class.

Statistically, I suppose, slightly more scientists are in religious terms unbelievers, compared with the rest of the intellectual world—though there are many who are religious (and that seems to be increasingly so among the young). Statistically also, slightly more scientists are "on the Left" in open politics—though again, many have always called themselves conservatives (and that also seems to be more common among the young). Compared with the rest of the intellectual world, considerably more scientists in this country, and probably in the U.S., come from poor families.* Yet, over a whole range of thought and behaviour, none of that matters very much: in their working, and in much of their emotional life, their attitudes are closer to other scientists than to non-scientists who in religion or politics or class may have the same labels.

That was as true of the conservatives J. J. Thomson and Lindemann as of the radicals, Einstein or Blackett; as true of the Christian A. H. Compton as of the materialist Bernal; of the aristocrats Broglie or Russell, as of the proletarian Faraday; of those born rich, like Thomas Merton or Victor Rothschild, as of Rutherford, who was the son of an odd-job handyman. Without thinking about it, they respond alike; that is what a "culture" means.

AT THE other pole, the spread of attitude is wider. It is obvious that between the two, as one moves through intellectual society from the physicists to the literary intellectuals, there are all kinds of tones of feeling on the way. But I believe the pole of *total incomprehension of*

* An analysis of the schools from which Fellows of the Royal Society come tells its own story. The distribution is markedly different from that of, for example, members of the Foreign Service or Queen's Counsel.

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science radiates its influence on all the rest. That total incomprehension gives, much more pervasively than we realise, an unscientific flavour to the whole "traditional" culture, and that unscientific flavour is often, much more than we admit, on the point of turning anti-scientific. The feelings of one pole become the anti-feelings of the other. If the scientists have the future in their bones, then the traditional culture responds by wishing the future did not exist. It is the traditional culture, to an extent remarkably little diminished by the emergence of the scientific one, which manages the western world.

This polarisation is sheer loss to us all, to us as people, and to our society. It is at the same time practical and intellectual and creative loss, and it is false to imagine that those three considerations are clearly separable.

The degree of incomprehension on both sides is the kind of joke which has gone sour. There are about fifty thousand working scientists in the country and about eighty thousand professional engineers or applied scientists. During the war and in the years since, my colleagues and I have had to interview somewhere between thirty to forty thousand of these, that is, about 25 per cent. The number is large enough to give us a fair sample, though of the men we talked to most would still be under forty. We were able to find out a certain amount of what they read and thought about. I confess that even I, who am fond of them and respect them, was a bit shaken. We hadn't quite expected that the links with the traditional culture should be so tenuous, nothing more than a formal touch of the cap.

As one would expect, some of the very best scientists had and have plenty of energy and interest to spare, and we came across several who had read almost everything that literary people talk about. But that is very rare. Most of the rest (when one tried to probe for what books they had read) would modestly confess, "Well, I've *tried* a bit of Dickens," rather as though Dickens were an extraordinarily esoteric, tangled and dubiously-rewarding writer, something like Rainer Maria Rilke. (In fact, that is exactly how they do regard him; we thought that discovery, that Dickens had been transformed into the type-specimen of literary incomprehensibility, was one of the oddest results of the whole exercise.)

But of course, in reading him, in reading almost any writer whom we should value, they are just touching their caps to the traditional culture. They have their own culture, intensive, rigorous, and constantly in action; it contains a great deal of argument, usually much more rigorous, and almost always at a higher conceptual level, than literary arguments—even though the scientists do cheerfully use words in senses which literary persons do not recognise, the senses are exact ones, and when they talk about "subjective," "objective," "philosophy" or "progressive," they know what they mean, even though it isn't what one is accustomed to expect.*

Remember, these are very intelligent men. Their culture doesn't contain much art, with the exception, an important exception, of music. Verbal exchange, insistent argument; long-playing records; colour-photography; the ear, to some extent the eye. Books, very little, though perhaps not many would go so far as one hero who, when asked what books he read, replied firmly and confidently: "Books? I prefer to use my books as tools." What sort of tool would a book make? perhaps a hammer? a primitive digging instrument? . . .

It is not that they are not interested in the psychological or moral or social life. In the social life, they certainly are, more than most of us; in the moral, they are by and large the soundest group of intellectuals we have (there is a moral component right in the grain of science itself). It is not that they lack the interests. It is much more that the whole literature of the traditional culture does not seem to them relevant to those interests. They are, of course, dead wrong, and as a result, their imaginative understanding is less than it could be. They are self-impoverished.

BUT what about the other side? They are impoverished too—perhaps more seriously because they are vainer about it. They still like to pretend that the traditional culture is the whole of "culture," as though the natural order didn't exist. As though the exploration of the natural order was of no interest either in its own value or its consequences. As though the scientific edifice of the physical world was not, in its intellectual depth, complexity and articulation, the most beautiful and wonderful collective work

* *Subjective*, in contemporary technological jargon, means "divided according to subjects." *Objective* means "directed towards an object." *Philosophy* means "general intellectual approach or attitude" (for example, a scientist's "philosophy of guided weapons" might lead him to propose certain kinds of "objective research"). A *progressive* job means one with possibilities of promotion.

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of the mind of man. Yet most non-scientists have no conception of that edifice at all. Even if they want to have it, they cannot: it is rather as though, over an immense range of intellectual experience, a whole group was tone-deaf. Except that this tone-deafness doesn't come by nature, but by training, or rather the absence of training.

As with the tone-deaf, they do not know what they miss. They give a pitying chuckle at the news of scientists who have never read a major work of English literature. They dismiss them as ignorant specialists. Yet their own ignorance and their own specialisation is just as startling. I have often been present at gatherings of people who (by the standards of the traditional culture) are thought highly educated and who have with considerable gusto been expressing their incredulity at the illiteracy of scientists. Once or twice I have been provoked and have asked the company how many of them could describe the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The response was cold; it was also negative. Yet I was asking something which is about the scientific equivalent of: *Have you read a work of Shakespeare?*

I now believe that if I had asked an even simpler question—"What does one mean by mass, or acceleration?" (which is the scientific equivalent of asking, *Can you read?*)—not more than one in ten of the highly educated would have felt that I was speaking the same language. So the great edifice of modern physics goes up, and the majority of the cleverest people in the western world have about as much insight into it as their neolithic ancestors would have had.

Two years ago or so, one of the most astonishing experiments in the whole history of science was brought off—the experiment at Columbia by Yang and Lee. It is an experiment of the greatest originality, but the result is so startling that one forgets how beautiful the experiment is. It makes us think again and again about some of the fundamentals of the physical world: "Intuition," "common-sense"—they are neatly stood on their heads. The result is usually known as "the contradiction of parity." If there were any serious communication between the two cultures, this experiment would have been talked about at every High Table in Oxford and Cambridge. Was it? I wasn't there. I should like only to put the question.

THERE seems then to be no place where the cultures meet. I am not going to waste time saying that this is a pity; it is much worse than that. Soon I shall come to some practical consequences. Still, it is bizarre how very little of 20th-century science has been assimilated into 20th-century art. Now and then one used to find poets conscientiously using scientific expressions, and getting them wrong. There was a time when "refraction" kept cropping up in verse in a mystifying fashion, and when "polarised light" was used as though writers were under the illusion that it was a specially admirable kind of light. Of course, that is not the way that science could be any good to art. It has got to be assimilated as part of the whole of our mental experience, and used as naturally as the rest.

I said earlier that this cultural divide is not just an English phenomenon; it exists all over the western world. But it probably seems at its sharpest in England, and for two reasons. One is our fanatical belief in educational specialisation, which is much more deeply ingrained in us than in any country in the world, west or east. The other is our tendency to let our social forms crystallise. This tendency appears to get stronger, not weaker, the more we iron out economic qualities; and this is specially true in education. It means that once anything like a cultural divide gets established, all the social forces operate to make it not less rigid, but more so.

The "two cultures" were already dangerously separate sixty years ago; but a Prime Minister like Lord Salisbury could have his own laboratory at Hatfield, and Arthur Balfour had a somewhat more than amateur interest in natural science. John Anderson did some research in organic chemistry in Wurtzburg before passing first into the Civil Service. None of that degree of interchange at the top of the Establishment is likely, or indeed thinkable, now.

In fact, the separation between the scientists and non-scientists is much less bridgeable among the young to-day. Thirty years ago the cultures had long ceased to speak to each other: but at least they managed a kind of frozen smile across the gulf. It is not only that the young scientists now feel that they are part of a culture on the rise while the other is in retreat. It is also, to be brutal, that the young scientists know that with an indifferent degree they will get a comfortable job, while their contemporaries and counterparts in English or History will be lucky to earn sixty per cent as much. No young scientist of any talent would feel that he isn't wanted or that his work is ridiculous as did the hero of *Lucky Jim*; and in fact, some of the disgruntlement of Amis and his associates is the

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disgruntlement of the under-employed arts graduate.

THERE is only one way out of all this: it is, of course, by re-thinking our education. In this country, for the two reasons I have given, that is more difficult than in any other. Nearly everyone will agree that our school education is too specialised. But nearly everyone feels that it is well outside the will of man to alter it. Other countries are as dissatisfied with their education as we are, but are not so resigned.

The Americans teach vastly more children up to eighteen than we do, and teach them more widely, if nothing like so rigorously. They know that, and they are hoping to take the problem in hand within ten years, though they may not have all that time to spare. The Russians also teach out of proportion more children than we do; they also teach far more widely than we do (it is an absurd western myth that their school education is specialised), but much more rigorously. They know that—and they are beating about to get it right. The Scandinavians (in particular, the Swedes), who would make a more sensible job of it than any of us, are handicapped by their practical need to devote an inordinate amount of time to foreign languages; but they too are seized of the problem.

Are we? Have we crystallised so far that we are no longer flexible at all?

Talk to schoolmasters, and they say that our intense specialisation (like nothing else on earth) is dictated by the Oxford and Cambridge scholarship examinations. If that is so, one would have thought it not utterly impracticable to change these; yet one would underestimate the national capacity for the intricate defensive to believe that that was easy. All the lessons of our educational history suggest we are only capable of increasing specialisation, not decreasing it.

Somehow we have set ourselves the task of producing a tiny élite—far smaller proportionately than in any comparable country—educated in one academic skill. For a hundred and fifty years in Cambridge it was mathematics; then it was mathematics or classics; then natural science was allowed in. But still the choice had to be a single one.

It may well be that this process has gone too far to be reversible. I think it is a disastrous process for the purpose of a living culture. I also think it is nearly fatal if we are to perform our practical tasks in the world.

THE reasons for the existence of the "two cultures" are many, deep, and complex, some rooted in social histories, some in personal histories, and some in the inner dynamic of the different kinds of mental activity themselves. But I want to isolate one which is not so much a reason as a correlative, something which winds in and out of any of these discussions. It can be said simply, and it is this: Except for those involved in the scientific culture, the western intellectuals have never tried, wanted, or been able to understand the industrial revolution, much less accept it. Intellectuals, in particular literary intellectuals, are natural Luddites.

That is specially true of this country, where the industrial revolution happened to us earlier than elsewhere, during a long spell of absent-mindedness. But, with a little qualification, it is also true (and surprisingly true) of the United States.

In both countries, and indeed all through the West, the first wave of the industrial revolution crept on without anyone noticing what was happening. It was, of course (or at least it was destined to become, under our own eyes, and in our own time), by far the biggest transformation in society since the discovery of agriculture. In fact, those two revolutions—the agricultural and the industrial-scientific—are the only qualitative changes in social living that men have ever known. But the traditional culture did not notice; or when it did, did not like what it saw. Not that the traditional culture wasn't doing extremely well out of the revolution. The English educational institutions took their slice of the English 19th-century wealth, and perversely, it helped crystallise them in the forms we know.

Almost none of the talent, almost none of the imaginative energy, went back into the revolution which was producing the wealth. The traditional culture became more abstracted from it as it became more wealthy. It trained its young men for administration, for the Indian Empire, for the purpose of perpetuating the culture itself, but never in any circumstances to equip them to understand the revolution or take part in it. Far-sighted men were beginning to see, before the middle of the 19th-century, that in order to go on producing wealth, the country needed to train some of its bright minds in science, particularly in applied science. No one listened. The traditional culture didn't listen at all; and the pure scientists, such as there were, didn't listen very eagerly. (The whole story, which in spirit continues down to the present day, has

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been told in Eric Ashby's *Technology and the Academics*.)

The academics had nothing to do with the industrial revolution; as Corrie, the old Master of Jesus, said about trains running into Cambridge on Sunday. "It is equally displeasing to God and to myself." So far as there was any thinking in 19th-century industry, it was left to cranks and clever workmen. American social historians have told me that much the same was true of the U.S. The industrial revolution, which began developing in New England fifty years or so later than ours,* apparently received very little educated talent, either then or later in the century. It had to make do with the guidance handymen could give it—sometimes, of course, handymen like Henry Ford, with a dash of genius.

The curious thing was that in Germany (in the 1830s and 1840s, long before serious industrialisation had started there), it was possible to get a good university education in applied science, more serious than anything England or the U.S. could offer for a couple of generations. I do not begin to understand this; it doesn't make social sense; but it was so. With the result that Ludwig Mond, the son of a court purveyor, went to Heidelberg and learnt some sound applied chemistry. Siemens, a Prussian signals officer, went through, at both military academy and university, what for their time were excellent courses in electrical engineering. Then they came to England, met no competition at all, brought in other educated Germans, and made fortunes exactly as though they were dealing with a rich illiterate colonial territory. Similar fortunes were made by German technologists in the United States.

Almost everywhere intellectual persons did not comprehend what was happening. Certainly the writers didn't. Many shuddered away, as though the right course for a man of feeling was to contract out; some, like Ruskin and William Morris and Thoreau and Emerson and Lawrence, tried various kinds of fancies which were not in effect more than screams of horror. It is hard to think of an important writer who really stretched his imaginative sympathy, who could see at once the hideous back-streets, the smoking chimneys, the internal price—and also the prospects of life that were opening out for the poor, the intimations, up to now unknown except to the lucky, which were just coming within reach of the remaining 99 per cent of his brother men. Some of the great Russian novelists might have done so, but though their natures were broad enough, they lived in a pre-industrial society. The only world writer who seems to have had an understanding of the industrial revolution was Ibsen in his old age; but then there wasn't much that old man didn't understand.

FOR, of course, one truth is straightforward: Industrialisation is the only hope of the poor. I use the word "hope" in a crude and prosaic sense. I have not much use for the moral sensibility of anyone who is too refined to use it so. It is all very well for us, sitting pretty, to think that material standards of living don't matter all that much. It is all very well for one, as a personal choice, to reject industrialisation. Do a modern Walden, if you like. And if you go without much food, see most of your children die in infancy, despise the comforts of literacy, accept twenty years off your own life, then I respect you for the strength of your æsthetic revulsion. But I don't respect you in the slightest if, even passively, you try to impose the same choice on others who are not free to choose. In fact, we know what their choice would be. For, with singular unanimity, in any country where they have had the chance, the poor have walked off the land into the factories as fast as the factories could take them.

I remember, as a child, talking to my grandfather, who was a good specimen of a 19th-century artisan. He was highly intelligent, had a great deal of character, left school at the age of ten, and educated himself intensely until he was an old man. He had all his class's passionate faith in education. Yet, he had never had the luck (or, as I now suspect, the worldly force and dexterity) to go very far; in fact, he never went further than maintenance foreman in a tramway depot. His life would seem to his grandchildren laborious and unrewarding almost beyond belief, but it didn't seem to him quite like that. He was much too sensible a man not to know that he hadn't been properly used; he had too much pride not to feel a proper rancour; he was disappointed that he had not done more; and yet, compared with *his* grandfather, he felt he had done a lot. His grandfather must have been an agricultural labourer, and I don't so much as

* It developed very fast. An English commission of enquiry into industrial productivity went over to the United States as early as 1865.

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know his Christian name. He was one of the "dark people," as the old Russian liberals used to call them, completely lost in the great anonymous sludge of history. So far as my grandfather knew, he could not read or write. He was a man of ability, my grandfather thought; my grandfather was pretty unforgiving about what society had done, or not done, to his ancestors, and did not romanticise their state. It was no fun being an agricultural labourer in the mid-to-late 18th century, in the time that we, snobs that we are, think of only as the time of the Enlightenment and Jane Austen....

The industrial revolution looked very different according to whether one saw it from above or below. It looks very different to-day according to whether one sees it from Chelsea or from a village in Asia. To people like my grandfather, there was no question that the industrial revolution was less bad than what had gone before: the only question was, how to make it better.

In a more sophisticated sense, that is still the question. In the advanced countries, we have realised in a rough and ready way what the old industrial revolution brought with it. A great increase of population (because applied science went hand-in-hand with medical science and medical care). Enough to eat (for a similar reason). Everyone able to read and write (because an industrial society can't work without). Health, food, education; nothing but the industrial revolution could have spread them right down to the very poor. Those are primary gains —there are losses too, of course, one of which is that organising a society for industry makes it easy to organise it for all-out war. But the gains remain, and they are the base of our social hope.

And yet: do we understand how they have happened? Have we begun to comprehend even the old industrial revolution, much less the new scientific revolution in which we stand?

(The second and concluding part of Sir Charles Snow's Cambridge Rede Lecture will be published next month.)

The Hard Creator

He sees the forest in its iron aspect;
Blossoms and boughs
Are tortured to extract their images.

The beaches open to the wind like petals,
He rubs them up rough:
A voice like, from those rocks, the sea-lion's bark.

Knives of nerves etch it upon his brain:
Yet, playing the heart
Like bagpipes, they freeze to bronze the song's shadow,

Laid out like streets rigid as where his city
Bubbles with bombs.
Wolves lope from a straddling darkness—*that forest*

Is set in a land that lacks its share of affect
And is not even
Peopled by philosophers and fauns.

Robert Conquest

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Laurie Lee

Grannies in the Wainscot

OUR HOUSE was 17th-century Cotswold, and was handsome as they go. It was built of stone, had hand-carved windows, golden surfaces, moss-flaked tiles, and walls so thick they held a damp chill inside them whatever the season or weather. Its attics and passages were full of walled-up doors which our fingers longed to open—doors that led to certain echoing chambers now sealed off from us forever. The place had once been a small country manor, and later a public beerhouse; but it had decayed even further by the time we got to it, and was now three poor cottages in one. The house was shaped like a "T", and we lived in the down-stroke. The top-stroke—which bore into the side of the bank like a rusty expended shell—was divided separately among two old ladies, one's portion lying above the other's.

Granny Trill and Granny Wallon were rival ancients and lived on each other's nerves; and their perpetual enmity was like mice in the walls and absorbed much of my early days. With their sickle-bent bodies, pale pink eyes, and wild wisps of hedgerow hair, they looked to me the very images of witches and they were also much alike. In all their time as such close neighbours they never exchanged a word. They communicated instead by means of boots and brooms—jumping on floors and knocking on ceilings. They referred to each other as "Er-Down-Under" and "Er-Up-Atop, the Varmint"; for each to the other was an airy nothing, a local habitation not fit to be named.

Er-Down-Under, who lived on our level, was perhaps the smaller of the two, a tiny white shrew who came nibbling through her garden, or sat sucking bread in the sun; always mysterious and self-contained and feather-soft in her movements. She had two names, which she changed at will according to the mood of her day. Granny Wallon was her best, and stemmed, we were told, from some distinguished alliance of the past. Behind this crisp and trotting body were certainly rumours of noble blood. But she never spoke of them herself. She was known to have raised a score of children. And she was known to be very poor. She lived on cabbage, bread, and potatoes—but she also made excellent wines.

Granny Wallon's wines were famous in the village, and she spent a large part of her year preparing them. The gathering of the ingredients was the first of the mysteries. At the beginning of April she would go off with her baskets and work round the fields and hedges; and every fine day till the end of summer would find her out somewhere in the valley. One saw her come hobbling home in the evening, bearing cargoes of crusted flowers, till she had buckets of cowslips, dandelions, elderblossom crammed into every corner of the house. The elder-flower, drying on the kitchen floor, seemed to cover it with scented frost, a crumbling rime of grey-green blossom disappearing in a fume of summer. Later the tiny grape-cluster of the elderberry itself would be seething in purple vats, with daisies and orchids thrown in to join it, even strands of the dog-rose bush.

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WHAT seasons fermented in Granny Wallon's kitchen, what summers were brought to the boil, with limp flower-heads heaped around the floor holding fast to their clotted juices: the sharp spiced honey of those cowslips first, then the coppery reeking dandelion, the bitter poppy's whiff of powder, the cat's-breath, death-green elder. Gleaning of days and a dozen pastures, strippings of lanes and hedges—she bore them home to her flag-tiled kitchen, sorted them each from each, built up her fires, and loaded her pots, and added her sugar and yeasts. The vats boiled daily in suds of sugar, revolving petals in throbbing water, while the air, aromatic, steamy, embalmed, distilled the hot dews and flowery soups and ran the wine down the dripping walls.

But not only flower-heads went into these brews; the old lady used parsnips, too, potatoes, sloes, crab-apples, quinces, in fact anything she could lay her hands on. Granny Wallon made wine as though demented, out of anything at all; and no doubt, if given enough sugar and yeast, could have made a decent drink out of rags.

She never hurried or hoarded her wines, but led them gently through their natural stages. After the boiling they were left to settle, to work in the silence of the vats. For several months, using pieces of toast, she scooped off their yeasty sediments. Then she bottled and labelled each liquor in turn and put them away for a year.

At last one was ready, then came the day of distribution. A squeak and a rattle would shake our window, and we'd see the old lady, wispily grinning, waving a large white jug in her hand.

"Hey there, missus! Try this'n, then. It's the first of me last year's cowslip."

Through the kitchen window she'd fill up our cups and watch us, head cocked, while we drank. The wine in the cups was still and golden, transparent as a pale spring morning. It smelt of ripe grass in some distant field and its taste was as delicate as air. It seemed so innocent we would swig away happily and even the youngest guzzled it down. Then a curious rocking would seize the head; tides rose from our feet like a fever, the kitchen walls began to shudder and shift, and we all fell in love with each other.

Very soon we'd be wedged, tight-crammed, in the window, waving our cups for more, while our mother, bright-eyed, would be mumbling gaily:

"Lord bless you, granny. Fancy cowsnips and parsney. You must give me the receipt, my dear."

Granny Wallon would empty the jug in our cups, shake out the last drops on the flowers, then trot away tittering down the garden path leaving us hugging ourselves in the window.

WHATEVER the small indulgencies with which Granny Wallon warmed up her old life, her neighbour, Granny Trill, had none of them. For Er-Up-Atop was as frugal as a sparrow and as simple in her ways as a grub. She could sit in her chair for hours without moving, a veil of blackness over her eyes, a suspension like frost on her brittle limbs, with little to show that she lived at all save the gentle motion of her jaws. One of the first things I noticed about old Granny Trill was that she always seemed to be chewing, sliding her folded gums together in a daylong ruminative cud. I took this to be one of the tricks of age, a kind of slowed-up but protracted feasting. I imagined her being delivered a quartern of loaves—say, on a Friday night—then packing the lot into her rubbery cheeks and chewing them slowly for days. In fact, she never ate bread at all—or butter, or meat, or vegetables—she lived entirely on tea and biscuits, and on porridge sent up by the Squire.

Granny Trill had an original sense of time which seemed to obey some vestigial pattern of another age. She breakfasted, for instance, at four in the morning, had dinner at ten, took tea at two-thirty, and was back in her bed at five. This régime never varied either winter or summer and belonged very likely to her childhood days when she lived in the woods with her father. To me it seemed a monstrous arrangement, upsetting the roots of order. But Granny Trill's time was for

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God, or the birds; and though she had an old clock she kept it simply for its tick, the hands having long since been lost.

In contrast to the subterranean, almost cavernous life which Granny Wallon lived down under, Granny Trill's cottage-door was always open and her living-room welcomed us daily. Not that she could have avoided us anyways for she lay at our nimble mercy. Her cottage was just outside our gate and there were geraniums in pots round the door. Her tiny room opened straight on the bank and was as visible as a last year's bird's-nest. Smells of dry linen and tea-caddies filled it, together with the sweeter tang of old flesh.

"You at home, Granny Trill? You in there, Gran?"

Of course—where else would she be? We heard her creaking sigh from within.

"Well, I'll be bound. That you varmints again?"

"We come on a visit, Gran."

"Just mind them pots then, or I'll cut you to pieces."

We three boys clumped indoors. She was perched in the windowsill, combing her thin white hair.

"What you doing, Gran?"

"Just biding still. Just biding and combing me bits."

THE room was blue and hazy with wood-smoke. We prowled slowly around its treasures, opening boxes, filling tea-pots with cotton-reels, skimming plates along the floor. The old lady sat and watched us mildly, taking very little notice, while her dry yellow arm swept up and down, and the black-toothed comb, as it slid through her hair, seemed to be raking the last ash of a fire.

"You going bald, Gran?"

"I still got me bits."

"It's coming out."

"Oh, no it ain't."

"Look at that dead stuff dropping out of your comb."

"That's healthy. It makes room for more."

We didn't think it mattered; it was merely conversation, any subject at all would do. But suddenly the old lady skipped out of her seat and began to leap up and down on the floor.

" 'Er down there! I got more than 'er. 'Er's bald as a tater root! Wicked old lump, I'll see 'er gone! 'Er's failing, you mark my words."

When the spasm was over, she was back in the window, winding her hair into a fragile bun. Beautiful were the motions of her shrunken hands, their movements so long rehearsed; her fingers flew and coiled and pinned, worked blind without aid of a mirror. The result was a structure of tight perfection, a small shining ball of snow.

"Get yer hands from me drawers! Them's female things!"

She sat relaxed now her hair was done, put on her cracked and steel-rimmed glasses, unhooked the almanac from off the wall, and began to read out bits aloud. She read in a clear and solemn voice, as though from the Holy Writ.

" 'Tragic Intelligence of a Disaster at Sea, in the Region of the Antipoods.' That's for June, poor creatures, with their families an' all. 'A Party of Scientists Will Slip Down a Crevice, With Certain Resultant Fatalities. . . .' Oh dear, oh well, if they must poke round them places. . . . 'A Murdered Cadaver will be Shockingly Uncovered in a Western Industrial Town.' There, what did I tell you! I knew that'd come. I been expecting that." She began to skip pages, running through the months, but giving weight to the warnings that struck her. " 'Crisis in Parliament.' . . . 'House Struck By Fireball.' . . . 'Riots.' . . 'A Royal Surprise.' . . . 'Turkish Massacre.' . . . 'Famine.' . . . 'War.' . . . 'The King Will Suffer a Slight Infirmity.' . . ." The mounting catalogue of disasters seemed to give her peace, to confirm her sense of order. In Old Moore's pages she saw the future's worst, saw it and was not dismayed. Such alarums were neither threats nor prophecies but simply repetitions, were comforting, frightful, and familiar, being composed of all that had fashioned her long past, the poisoned cuds she had so patiently chewed, swallowed, and yet survived.

"Ah, well," she said placidly, as she lay

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down the book, "he foresees some monstrous doings. A terrible year it looks to be. And he says we'll have hail on Tuesday. . . ."

We boys took up the almanac and leafed through the pages, seeking the more ominous pictures. We saw drawings of skies cracked across by lightning, of church towers falling, multitudes drowning, of men in frock-coats shaking warning fingers, of coffins laden with crowns. The drawings were crude but jaggedly vital, like scratches on a prison wall. We relished them much as did Granny Trill, as signs of an apocalypse which could not touch us. In them we saw the whole outside world, split, convulsive, and damned. It had nothing, of course, to do with our village; and we felt like little gods, both compassionate and cruel, as we savoured these bloody visions.

GRANNY TRILL used the almanac as an appetiser; now she shifted to her table for dinner. She sopped a few biscuits in a cup of cold tea and scooped the wet crumbs into her mouth, then began grinding away with such an effort of gums one would have thought she was cracking bones. She wore, as usual, her black net dress, but her bright old head rising out of it looked like a flame on a smoking lamp. Her brow was noble, her pink eyes glittered, her nose swooped down like a finger; only the lower part of her face was collapsed and rubbery, but then that did all the work.

"You a hundred yet, Granny?"

"Nigh on—nigh on."

"Have you got a dad?"

"Bless you, no; he died long ago. He was killed by a tree over Elcombe."

She had often told us the story, and now she told us again. Her father had been a woodcutter, strong as a giant—he could lift up a horse and wagon. From the age of five, when she lost her mother, she lived with him in the woods. They used to sleep in a tent, or a kind of wigwam of pine branches, and while her father was tree-felling the little girl made baskets and sold them around the village. For ten years they lived this life together and were perfectly contented. Very soon she grew into a beautiful young girl—"I seemed to send men breathless somehow"—but her father was careful, and when the timbermen came he used to hide her under piles of sacking.

Then one day—she was fifteen years old at the time—a tree fell on her father. She heard him shout and ran up to the thicket and found him skewered into the ground with a branch. He was lying face down and couldn't see her. "I'm going, Alice," he'd said. She clawed a hole with her hands and lay down beside him, and held him until he died. It took twenty-four hours, and she never moved, nor did he speak again.

When at last some carters discovered them, she was still lying with the body. She watched them roll the tree off him, and straighten his limbs, then she ran up the Scrubs and hid. She hid for a week near some fox-holes there, and neither ate nor drank. Then the Squire sent out a search party, and when they found her she fought like a savage. But they managed to carry her down to the Manor, where she was given a bath and a bed. "That was the first bath I ever had," said Granny. "It took six of 'em to get me soaped." But they nursed her and pacified her, and gave her housework to do, and later married her to George Trill, the gardener. "He were a good man, too; he settled me. I was about sixteen years at the time. He was much like me dad, only a good bit slower—and a lot older than I, of course."

WHEN she finished her story her chin was resting in her cup and her features were abstracted and bright. Little veins, like frost, crackled around her eyes, and her skull pushed hard through the skin. Could she ever have been that strapping Alice whom the carters had chased through the woods? a girl of sixteen who men washed and married? the age of our sister Dorothy? . . .

"Me dad planted that tree," she said absently, pointing out through the old cracked window.

The great beech filled at least half the sky and shook shadows all over the house. Its roots clutched the slope like a giant hand,

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holding the hill in place. Its trunk writhed with power, threw off veils of green dust, rose towering into the air, branched into a thousand shaded alleys, became a city for owls and weather. I had thought such trees to be as old as the earth, I never dreamed that a man could make them. Yet it was Granny Trill's dad who had planted this tree, had thrust in the seed with his finger. How old must he have been to leave such a mark? Think of Granny's age, and add his on top, and you were back at the beginning of the world.

"He were a young man then, a-course," said Granny. "He set it afore he got married." She squinted up at the height of the tree, and sat there nodding gently, while a branch of green shadows, thrown by its leaves, moved softly across her face.

"I got a-see to summat," she said abruptly, slipping creakily down from her chair. She left us then, gathered up her skirts, and trotted lightly along to the wood. We saw her squatting among the undergrowth, bright-eyed, like a small black partridge. Old age might compel her to live in a house, but for comfort she still went to the woods.

GRANNY TRILL and Granny Wallon were traditional ancients of a kind we won't see to-day, the last of that dignity of grandmothers to whom age was its own embellishment. The grandmothers of those days dressed for the part in that curious but endearing uniform which is now known to us only through music-halls. And our two old neighbours, when setting forth on errands, always prepared themselves scrupulously so. They wore high-laced boots and long muslin dresses, beaded chokers and candlewick shawls, crowned by tall poke bonnets tied with trailing ribbons and smothered with inky sequins. They looked like starlings, flecked with jet, and they walked in a tinkle of darkness.

Those severe and similar old bodies enthralled me when they dressed that way. When finally I became King (I used to think) I would command a parade of grandmas, and drill them, and march them up and down—rank upon rank of nodding bonnets, flying shawls, hobbling boots, and furious, chewing faces. They would be gathered from all the towns and villages and brought to my palace in wagon-loads. No more than a monarch's whim, of course, like eating cocoa or drinking jellies; but far more spectacular any day than those usual trudging guardsmen.

In spite of their formal dressing-up, the two old ladies never went very far; now and again to church for the sermon, and to the village shop once a week. Granny Wallon went for her sugar and yeast; Granny Trill for her tuppence of snuff.

Snuff was Granny T.'s one horrible vice, and she indulged it with no moderation. A fine brown dust coated all her clothes and she had nostrils like badger-holes. She kept her snuff in a small round box, made of tin and worn smooth as a pebble. She was continually tapping and snapping it open, pinching a nailful, gasping *Ah!*, flicking her fingers and wiping her eyes, and leaving on the air a faint dry cloud like an explosion of fungoid dust.

The snuff-box repelled and excited us boys and we opened its lid with awe. Reeking substance of the underworld, clay-brown dust of decay, of powdered flesh and crushed old bones, rat-scrapings and the rubbish of graves. How sharp and stinging was this fearful spice, wreathing up from its box, animating the air with tingling fumes like a secret breath of witchery. Though we clawed and sniffed it we could not enjoy it, but neither could we leave it alone.

"You at me snuff agen, you boys? I'll skin yer bottoms, I will!"

We looked up guiltily, saw her cackling face, so took a big pinch between us. With choking tears and head-rocking convulsions we went rolling across the floor. The old lady regarded us with pleasure; our paroxysms shook the house.

"That'll learn you, I reckon; you thieving mites. Here, give it to me, I'll show 'ee."

She took up the box and tapped the lid, then elegantly fed her nose. A shudder of

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ecstasy closed her eyes. She was borne very far away.

ONE morning our mother was paring apples for a pie, so we boys settled down to the peelings. They lay in green coils upon the table exuding their tart fresh odours. Slowly we chewed through the juicy ribbons, mumbling our jaws as we went.

"I'm old Granny Trill, a-eating her dinner," said Jack, sucking peel through his gums. A great joke, this; we chewed and moaned, making much of the toothless labour.

"Don't mock," said our mother. "The poor, poor soul—alone by herself all day."

We glanced at our sisters to share our wit but got no encouragement there. They were absorbed as usual in some freakish labour, stitching dead birds on canvas hats.

"The poor lone creature," our mother went on, lowering her voice out of charity. "It's a sin and a shame!" She raised it again. "That's what it is—a crime! You girls ought to pay her a visit. You know how she dotes on you all."

Our sisters had reached the impressive stage; they talked careful and dressed in splendour—as fine, that is, as they were able to do with the remnants that fell to their hands. With a short length here, a bit of tulle there, a feather picked up at a sale, a hedgehog of needles, a mouthful of pins, a lot of measuring, snipping, and arguing—it was remarkable what glories they conjured up considering what little they had.

They were always willing to put on a show, so they accepted Mother's suggestion. They decided to deck themselves out in their best and to give old Gran Trill a treat. The attics were ransacked, the cupboards breached, and very soon all was uproar. Quarrelling, snatching, but deadly efficient, they speedily draped themselves; took a tucket in here, let a gusset out there, spliced a waist or strapped up a bodice; in no time at all they were like paradise birds, and off they minced to see the old lady.

Enthralled as ever by their patchwork splendours, I followed them closely behind. Beautiful Marge led the way up the path and rapped elegantly on Granny's door. Meanwhile Doth and Phyl hitched their slipping girdles, pushed the bandeaux out of their eyes, stood hands on hips making light conversation—two jazz-debs bright in the sun.

For once Granny Trill seemed hard of hearing, though the girls had knocked three times. So with a charming shrug and a fastidious sigh Marge swung a great kick at the door.

"Who's that?" came a frightened yelp from within.

"It's only us," trilled the girls.

They waltzed through the door, apparitions of rose, striking postures straight out of *Home Notes*. "How do we look then, Gran?" asked Marjorie. "This line is the mode, you know. We copied it out of that pattern book. It's the rage in Stroud, they say."

Riffling their feathers, arching their necks, catching coy reflections in mirrors, they paraded the room, three leggy flamingoes, each lit by a golden down. To me they were something out of the sky, airborne visions of fairy light; and with all the enthusiasm they were capable of they gave the old lady the works. Yet all was clearly not going well. There was a curious chill in the air.

Granny watched them awhile, then her jaws snapped shut; worse still, her gums stopped chewing. Then she clapped her hands with a terrible crack.

"You baggages! You jumped-up varmints! Be off, or I'll fetch me broom!"

The girls retreated at the dainty double, surprised but in no way insulted. Their sense of fashion was unassailable, for were they not up with the times? How could the old girl know about belts and bandeaux?—after all, she was only a peasant....

But later Gran Trill took our mother aside and spoke grimly of her concern.

"You better watch them three gels of yourn," she said. "They'll bring shame on us one of these days. Strutting and tennis-playing and aping the gentry—it's carnal and blasphemy. Just you watch 'em, missus; I

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don't like their doings. Humble gels got to remember their stations."

Mother, I fancy, was half with her there; but she wouldn't have dreamed of interfering.

For several more years the lives of the two old ladies continued to revolve in intimate enmity around each other. Like cold twin stars, linked but divided, they survived by a mutual balance. Both of them reached back similarly in time, shared the same modes and habits, the same sense of feudal order, the same rampaging terrible God. They were far more alike than unalike, and could not abide each other.

They arranged things, therefore, so that they never met. They used separate paths when they climbed the bank, they shopped on different days, they relieved themselves in different areas, and staggered their church-going hours. But each one knew always what the other was up to, and passionately disapproved. Granny Wallon worked at her flowering vats, boiling and blending her wines; or crawled through her cabbages; or tapped on our windows, gossiped, complained, or sang. Granny Trill continued to rise in the dark, comb her waven hair, sit out in the wood, chew, sniff, and suck up porridge, and study her almanacs. Yet between them they sustained a mutual awareness based solely on ear and nostril. When Granny Wallon's wines boiled, Granny Trill had convulsions. And when Granny Trill took snuff, Granny Wallon had strictures. And neither let the other forget it. So all day they listened, sniffed, and pried; rapping on floors and ceilings; and prowled their rooms with hawking coughs, chivvying each other long-range. It was a tranquil, bitter-pleasant life, perfected by years of custom; and to me they both seemed everlasting, deathless crones of an eternal mythology; they had always been somewhere there in the wainscot and I could imagine no world without them.

Then one day, as Granny Trill clambered out of her wood, she stumbled and broke her hip. She went to bed then for ever. She lay patient and yellow in a calico coat, her combed hair fine as a girl's. She accepted her doom without complaint, as though some giant authority—Squire, father, or God—had ordered her there to receive it.

"I knowed it was coming," she told our mother, "after that visitation. I saw it last week sitting at the foot of me bed. Some lady in white; I dunno. . . ."

There was a sharp early rap on our window next morning; Granny Wallon was bobbing outside.

"Did you hear him, missus?" she asked knowingly. "He been a-screeching around since midnight." The death-bird was Granny Wallon's private pet and messenger, and she skipped as she told us about him. "He called three-a-four times. Up in them yews. Her's going, you mark my words."

And that day indeed Granny Trill died, whose bones were too old to mend. Like a delicate pale bubble, blown a little higher and further than the other girls of her generation, she had floated just long enough for us to catch sight of her, had hovered before our eyes; and then had popped suddenly, and disappeared for ever, leaving nothing on the air but a fast-drying image and the tiniest cloud of snuff.

The old lady had been a landmark among us, and the church was packed for her funeral. They carried her coffin along the edge of the wood and then drew it on a cart through the village. Granny Wallon, dressed in a shower of jets, followed some distance behind; and during the service she kept to the back of the church and everybody admired her.

All went well till the lowering of the coffin, when there was a sudden and distressing commotion. Granny Wallon, ribbons flying, her bonnet awry, fought her way to the side of the grave.

"It's a lie!' she screeched, pointing down at the coffin. "That baggage were younger'n me! Ninety-five, she says!—ain't more'n ninety, an' I gone on ninety-two! It's a crime you letting 'er go to 'er Maker got up in such brazen lies. Dig up the old devil! Get 'er brass plate off! It's insulting the living church! . . ."

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They carried her away, struggling and crying, kicking out with her steel-sprung boots. Her cries grew fainter and were soon obliterated by the sounds of the grave-diggers' spades. The clumps of clay falling on Granny Trill's coffin sealed her with her inscription for ever; for no one knew the truth of her age, there was no one old enough to know.

GRANNY WALLON had triumphed, she had buried her rival; and now there was no more to do. From then on she faded and diminished daily, kept to her house and would not be seen. Sometimes we heard mysterious knocks in the night, rousing and summoning sounds. But the days were silent, no one walked in the garden, or came skipping to claw at our window. The wine fires sank and died in the kitchen, as did the sweet fires of obsession.

About two weeks later, of no special disease, Granny Wallon gave up in her sleep. She was found on her bed, dressed in bonnet and shawl, with her signalling broom in her hand. Her open eyes were fixed on the ceiling in a listening stare of death. There was nothing in fact to keep her alive; no cause, no bite, no fury. Er-Down-Under had joined Er-Up-Atop, having lived closer than anyone knew.

Midnight is Made of Bricks

What pleasure hath it, to see in a mangled carcase?
The Confessions of Saint Augustine.

I am old of this ravening.
Poisoned of their God-damned flesh.
The ugly man-flesh
And the fat woman-flesh.
I am tired and sick and old of it.
But the precise addition is unrelenting.
Even now
It rouses sluggishly in me
And soon the imperious iron bells
Bells
Will begin
And the knowledge of the next one
Will enter me.
The realisation of her walking quietly
Somehow toward our somewhere meeting
The realisation will come
And the need will be on me
And I must begin again.
Seeking along the great river of Fillmore
Or the peaceful river of Pacific Heights
With its birds.
Or through the cities of Market Street
Or the pastures of Potrero Hill
Or the prairie of Sunset.
Perhaps this time it will be back
At the beginning
In the caves of the Beach.
In VESUVIO'S maybe
Where they come like deer.
Or THE PLACE where they come like
Ugly deer
Laughing
And telling me
All intense
How they want to experience
Everything
Till the shouting begins in my head.
Asking me if I believe in Evil
And the power climbs in me like Kong.

In the morning
It will be like every morning.
The filthy taste in my mouth
Of old, clotting blood
The vomiting
And the murderous, stupid labour
With the stupid, open body.

Jack Gilbert

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Andrew Boyd

Moscow Notebook

BEFORE lunch, we agreed that "our Nikita Sergeyevich" was quite right to try to cut down Russian drinking; but that was before lunch. My companions in the Air France plane to Moscow were half-a-dozen senior Soviet officials, returning from trade missions in Africa and Asia. After a while I was struck by the fact that none of them had even mentioned the Soviet jetliner that flies the same route from Paris. As a matter of fact, they seemed quite content to extend their dalliance in a western atmosphere for a few hours. They relished the more lively Paris newspapers and magazines, especially the latest tales about some royal romance or other. When the stewards spread out their pedlar's pack of duty-free wares, they took my advice on the best choice of Scotch; and there was a brisk turnover in Christian Dior nylons (the favourite shade being, I think, *Terre de Feu*).

Lunchtime came. A gleaming trolley appeared at our elbows, with aperitifs, cocktails, whisky, vodka, white wine, red wine, champagne, cognac, liqueurs. Toasting each other with growing solemnity in three tongues (French proving a very helpful *lingua franca* when either party ran out of the other's language) we worked through them all.

Soporific chat went on through a long drowsy afternoon. The evils of drink were not mentioned again. By general agreement, we were all mature citizens; it was the young who needed to be saved from falling into bad ways. Other aspects of Mr. Khrushchev's policies, however, received further praise. It was sober, judgmatical praise, not adulation; my companions spoke of their leader much as managing directors might speak of a competent President of the Board of Trade. One phrase lingered in my ear long after it had been casually uttered:

"You see, *Gaspadin* Boyd, now that we Russians are free. . . ." (It was not a reference to the revolution of 1917.)

We exchanged visiting cards all round. Later, in Moscow, when I offered new acquaintances a card with an invitation to ring me up if they came to London, I sometimes got an unexpectedly embarrassed apology.

"I'm afraid I can't give you one in return. We don't have cards here."

If I then pulled out a dozen cards already given me by Russians, it created a mild sensation. Such episodes soon brought it home to me that Russia is above all a country whose people don't know how the other half lives.

Pictures Behind the Door

IT IS a striking experience to walk into a one-room home in Moscow and find a wall—the wall you couldn't see from the door—hung with examples of the "secret" modern art which young Russian painters now practise despite all the official anathema. My host, Vladimir T. (we had met while waiting for a number 107 bus in Herzen St.), was not himself a painter, not even a Sunday one. He was a lecturer from Moscow's older university, the 18th-century foundation of Mikhail Lomonosov, the fisherman's son who now numbers a submarine ridge in the Arctic Ocean among his monuments. Vladimir's tastes were mainly conservative, by western standards; though, by the standards of Soviet orthodoxy, his weakness for bootlegged, long-playing records of American musicals, of which he had a very up-to-date collection (including *My Fair Lady*) was somewhat risqué. But modern painting, whether it was western work or these secret products of his own Russian contemporaries, aroused his passionate interest.

"Have you seen the Polish pictures?"

That was almost his first question; it recurred

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in Moscow conversations. I learnt that a joint exhibition of the art of the various satellite countries had been arranged. The Poles, apparently bent on making a declaration of independence in pigment, had sent the most extreme of their post-1956 works.

"Pour épater le prolétariat," said a Russian friend from the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, with a happy smile. He was not, of course, speaking in his official capacity; we were a safe distance from the building opposite VOKS in Kalinin Street where Mr. Yuri Zhukov has built up his new bureaucratic empire—largely, I gathered, by first climbing on people's shoulders and then kicking them in the teeth. The Polish post-October pictures made the more pious citizenry of Moscow recoil in horror, just as they were meant to do; but the show became the talk of the town.

Only in private homes like Vladimir's, however, can you see modern painting by Russians that offends against the dreary code of "socialist realism." These "private views" reveal not only a strong impressionist school (after all, impressionism took hold in Russia before 1917) but also bold and powerful abstracts, and lighthearted ventures into the Dufy country.

"Is this all being done in isolation?" I asked one artist. "Or have you been able to keep in touch with developments in the outside world?"

"Well, there are ways and means, *kanyechno*. . . . You can't even buy an ordinary little book of reproductions published anywhere outside the 'socialist camp'—not officially, you can't. But we get things sometimes through the Poles and from Berlin. And university people and so on bring back books and magazines from the West and from Asia. There are a few useful things in the libraries, though you can't take them out and only the privileged can get at them. And what we do get, we share. You'd be surprised how many of us know all about Klee and Arp and Leger and Miró. Even about those naughty émigrés like Kandinsky and Chagall."

"Do the official art magazines reproduce western moderns in order to criticise them?"

"Not the serious journals. In the ordinary weeklies, like *Krokodil* or *Ogonyók*, you'll see cartoons making fun of chimpanzee painting and so on. But *Khudozhnik*, for instance, wouldn't ever reproduce your modern paintings. Too risky. They might find they had record sales of that issue."

Vladimir showed me the latest issue of *Khudozhnik* (The Painter). The dead hand of "socialist realism" lay across its pages like a withered pressed flower. The frontispiece was inevitably devoted to Lenin, surrounded by revolutionary type-figures. The editor, Lebyedyev, and other contributors had managed to work in a dozen or more reverent quotations from Khrushchev's speeches. Stalin's "court" painter, Alexander Gerasimov, was still represented as a noble example. Among the heroic, jolly, dedicated, and virtually faceless peasants and workers of the Soviet period, some reproductions of Repins from the 1880's merely emphasised how far official Soviet art has fallen short of even the late-Victorian masters.

"For us, Repin is not history. He is our contemporary," says the Minister of Culture, Mr. Mikhailov.

I quoted this remark, which I thought unintentionally revealing, to a casual acquaintance I had met in the Tretyakov Gallery. He smiled and shook his head.

"*Mozhet bit*. . . . But look at Repin's *Nye zhdali* here." (It is the 1884 painting of a haggard repatriate from Siberia suddenly walking in upon the family that had never thought to see him again.) "Contemporary situation, *pravo*. But in those days Repin could paint things like that, and still they made him professor in St. Petersburg."

Across a table in the Aragvi restaurant, a friendly young engineer, Sergei V., asked me a question to which he rather seemed to expect a discouraging answer.

"How were the Russian pictures received in London?"

I didn't at that time know his views at all well, and he was a gentle soul, like most of the Muscovites I encountered—a most refreshing change from the braggart manner affected by so many Russians when abroad. So I groped for words that would not sound too damping about the unhappy winter exhibition at the Royal Academy. But I needn't have bothered. While I was still fumbling with a phrase, he nodded glumly, without any sign of surprise, and muttered, to himself as much as to me:

"*Nu*, what did they expect?"

How to Look Foreign

MY COMPANIONS in the plane had been intrigued to see me looking at a new guide to Moscow which included street maps. You can now buy quite good street plans in Moscow itself; they are, it seems, such a new apparition

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that these Russians returning from missions abroad did not know they existed.

To be seen studying a map in public no longer arouses suspicion, not in central Moscow at any rate. Instead, it's a useful way of showing that you're a foreigner, and therefore interesting. You may have to brush off a few spivs who want to buy your clothes and so forth; but it's worth that trouble because you also meet nice people. Pushful and curt with each other, like many other big-city types, Muscovites seem to respond quickly to a friendly smile from a foreigner.

Policemen always gave me helpful directions and a respectful salute. Perhaps a foreigner is normally presumed to belong to some important delegation; once or twice I got gratuitous salutes from police lieutenants too. But I was never sure how foreign I looked. It was winter, and I wasn't wearing a fur hat, but a fair number of Muscovites weren't, either. Skidding about on icy pavements, I soon found I was developing those characteristically Russian square shoulders as part of the balancing act; and the coat-hangers in the innumerable cloakrooms where one was always having to queue up to leave one's overcoat and then queue up again to get it back, even if you were just visiting somebody in his office, were reshaping my coat in the same way. Upper-class Soviet Man now seems much better dressed than I usually am (in winter anyway). By my third day in Moscow I evidently looked sufficiently at home on the buses and the Metro for people to start asking me how to get to Sokolniki Park or the Arbat.

"Would you mistake me for a Russian?" I asked a Soviet friend whom I had known in London.

He smiled, but then looked me over carefully.

"Well, really, there's only one thing—your signet ring. Men don't wear them here."

Phantom of the Metro

MAPS and the Metro presented me with one small puzzle which still intrigues me. The mint-new map I had just bought at the hotel bookstall showed one underground line that ran diagonally right across the city the way I wanted to go. But the first train I took ran only three stations and then turned round. I found there were really two separate lines, the Arbat–Pokrovskaya and Arbat–Philevskaya, which overlapped for these three stations only; and although the Metro was presumably built, unlike the London and New York underground systems, as a single system, you had to come to the surface and walk to a separate station at several of the connecting points, of which this was unfortunately one. Next day, at another bookstall, I bought another map, identical with the first except that it showed the two lines correctly—and bore a date of printing just two months later.

Nobody could ever explain this odd phenomenon to me. The Moscow underground is run with an efficiency that is far more impressive than its chandeliers and mosaics. Could its various departments have been so secretive that somebody managed to deceive the map-makers about the real whereabouts of the lines? Or were the map-makers happily indifferent about putting out highly imaginative Metro plans? Or both?

Colonel Bogey

THREE hospitable Soviet journalists took me to dine at the *Uzbekistan* restaurant in Neglinaya Street—a livelier place than most of those to which foreigners are channelled, with genuine Uzbek cooking (not, honestly, to my taste, but a memorable experience), and genuine Uzbeks in skull caps having the time of their lives. The main attractions for them were a jazz band, and a rather tarnished blonde in white organdie putting over western "pop" tunes (including *Volare*, which I remembered had been ravaging Manhattan a bare six months before; here was visible progress in the campaign to "catch up with America"). The visitors from Tashkent sat enthralled, scrutinising this apparition at close range through intently narrowed eyes, while their shashlik cooled on the spits.

A few nights later I was in the *Uzbekistan* again, talking about current films in Moscow with Vasily M., a pleasant young teacher at the Gneissen musical schools in Vorovsky Street, one of Moscow's famous pre-revolutionary foundations. The popular draw of the moment, he said was *A Soldier's Heart*. From his description, it certainly sounded good box-office stuff. But, personally, he would recommend—"Oh, but you'll have seen it, it's English." It proved to be *A Kid for Three Farthings*.

This brought up the subject of British films in general.

"This will interest you. They've decided not to show *The Bridge on the River Kwai* here."

"Why not?"

"Because it shows a British officer prisoner

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collaborating with the enemy."

"That's odd. Then they've misunderstood the plot. But, surely, if they do regard the colonel as a collaborator, they'd be happy to show the film as an example of the rottenness of our imperialist-militarist officers?"

Vasily shrugged. "Well, they're afraid of his example having a bad effect on the morale of the Soviet soldier. That's what I hear."

I found it surprising that a British colonel, even when personified by Sir Alec Guinness, was expected to have such influence on Red Army morale. There was, of course, no way of finding out whether this odd little rumour was true. The point is that in Moscow, where most intelligent people are sceptical about anything they are told officially, anything going the rounds by word of mouth seems to be much more readily believed.

Two Statues

THE theatres seemed fairly evenly divided between pre-revolutionary classics and modern western plays; I was told that this is now pretty normal. Alongside *Three Sisters* and a dramatisation of *Dead Souls*, there were billings for Cronin's *Jupiter Laughs*, Sartre (forgiven again), and Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*. Mayakovsky remains the chief exception. His *Klop* (The Bedbug), that biting satire on the soullessness of collectivised society, was permitted a few years ago after a long ban, and is still a favourite, although the Soviet Bowdlers have tried to do their worst with it. (Moscow's current stage version of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*, on the other hand, is not Hollywood's bowdlerised version.)

A glance round the bookshops suggests that Mayakovsky is now, in fact, second only to Lenin as a personality recommended for study. There is more openness now about his disillusion and suicide, but not complete frankness; strenuous efforts are made to fit him into the approved scheme of things, the bits that won't quite fit in being trimmed off and pushed out of sight. Oddly similar treatment has been given to Nikolai Gogol. The symbol of this is the fate of the admirable statue of Gogol, by Andreyev, which stood in Arbat Square from 1909 until a few years ago. The statue brings out all the melancholy that constantly oppressed him and finally turned his intense religious feeling into mania. This obviously would not do. Public statuary in the Soviet capital ought to be heroic, jolly, or "positive" in some other way. So a distinctly more complacent monument was put up in the square instead.

But the melancholy statue was not destroyed. It was installed in the courtyard of the house nearby where Gogol spent his last years: number 6, Suvorov Boulevard, nearly opposite the Central House of Journalists. (Intending visitors may like to note the address, as the official map and list of monuments pass over it in silence; when you find it, however, the house is marked by a plaque, and the statue is easily seen from the street.) Somehow this struck me as symbolic of the present state of things in Moscow—especially when, passing that way late one night with some Russian friends who had been entertaining me at the *Praga*, we saw a couple of young men standing silently in the snow, gazing intently at the statue.

The sight of them at once brought to mind one of the examples of "unapproved" Russian sculpture of which Vasily had shown me photographs—a grimly powerful bas-relief titled *Molchaniye* (Silence): one massive Epsteinian paw clamped over the mouth of a heavy, lowering face.

Winning Ticket

AS POLLING day approached—local and regional councils were being elected, not the Supreme Soviet itself—the Moscow press began to feature articles demonstrating that the Soviet electoral system was far more democratic than those of the West. Then came other articles, under headings like "On the Eve," extolling the efforts of the Party workers in the local *agitpunkts* and committee rooms; and finally great front-page splashes—"EVERYONE TO THE POLLS." It was hard to tell whether all this was necessary, or indeed whether it had any effect. I never seemed to see a Russian reading a newspaper in a bus or a Metro train, except for a few people reading the magazine pages of the evening paper or looking at the lists of films and plays. People knew they had to go and vote anyway, to keep their records right; and by the actual polling day there were plenty of red flags out to remind them, and big banners with slogans like "LONG LIVE COMMUNISM, BRIGHT FUTURE OF ALL PEOPLES OF THE WORLD," and canned music from loudspeakers outside the voting stations. Still, it gave the papers something to fill their pages with.

Most Muscovites voted early, either before

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they started work (although it was a Sunday) or in order to get it done with and enjoy the day of rest. I found myself having a whole series of casual conversations along these lines:

"Have you voted yet?"

"Yes—(with a touch of pride)—before seven o'clock."

"Is your candidate a good one?"

"Yes," or "Of course," or "I hope so."

"What's his name?"

"Er . . . h'm . . . Mikhailov (or Kuznetsov, or Popov), I *think*."

One or two smilingly admitted that they really had no idea. Others enthusiastically assured me that the local candidate was a splendid fellow. I tried a few gentle sallies, to see if anyone would play back the arguments I had seen in the press about the superiority of the Soviet electoral system; but nobody wanted to play.

In the afternoon I took a train out to an industrial suburb, and was surprised to see a long queue outside one polling station. Why so many latecomers here? Curiosity overcoming my feeling that perhaps I wouldn't be too welcome, I wandered inside. The local officials were only too glad to entertain a foreign visitor. They weren't at all busy; the queue turned out to be for a cinema in the same building. I was shown, with natural pride, some delightfully decorated little voting booths, demurely curtained, colourfully papered, for all the world like nooks and alcoves in a London espresso coffee-bar; the nicest bit of contemporary *décor* I had seen anywhere in Moscow so far. It seemed a pity that the actual voters never got a peep inside these pretty little exhibits. While I was making admiring noises, they were trickling in and very sensibly staying well away from the curtained booths, dropping their ballot papers into the box unmarked to show that they weren't spoiling them.

Perhaps it's because Russians miss the excitement of waiting for election results that they're so mad about lotteries. They have lotteries all the time, at all levels. At the State level there are the premium bonds or lottery loans, with the newspapers regularly printing the *tirage* or list of winning numbers; at the bottom end of the scale you come across people patiently cutting up long rolls of paper to make improvised tickets for some modest little draw. A Russian friend told me that a winning ticket can be worth a good deal more than one would think. Having collected your winnings, you can still sell the ticket to another Russian for a tidy sum. He wants it simply to show to all his friends; not just to impress them, but because he has made some money by doubtful means. And if officialdom ever starts to ask where it came from, he can produce the ticket and call on his friends to support his story.

"Ya Propal . . ."

Boris Pasternak kept cropping up in conversation. All sorts of Russians wanted to talk about him. Some had read *Dr. Zhivago* in their official capacity as members of the ruling literary and Party cliques; some had got it from friends or relatives who were members; some had seen copies smuggled in from abroad; some claimed to have read it, but I suspect they just didn't like to admit they hadn't been able to get hold of a copy. Others said they had read everything else that Pasternak had written, and proceeded to recite extracts, ranging from *Twin in the Clouds* to *On Early Trains*, with a very moving fervour; all the more moving when a poem from *Zhivago* was slipped in too.

There were occasional challenges, of course.

"Tell us, now, honestly. Had you ever heard of Pasternak before the West began to make all this fuss about him?"

"Well, yes, as a matter of fact," I was able to reply (feeling that this, although true, savoured a bit too much of lifemanship). "I still have a copy of his translation of *Romeo and Juliet* which I bought in Tel Aviv in 1945."

There was lively interest in the poem beginning *"Ya propal, kak zver v zagonye . . ."* ("I am lost, like a wild animal in an enclosure . . ."),* which Pasternak had written in despair after being forced to refuse his Nobel Prize. Everyone seemed agreed that, if he had not meant it to be published, the journalist who had reported its existence had acted wrongly and unfeelingly. Everyone was eager for a sight of it; some were unable to control their emotion when they got one.

Like one of Pasternak's own beloved trains, this kind of talk about him rumbled on and on late into night after night, argumentative, impassioned, philosophical, ironic by turns. In bleak contrast was the stylised lecture I endured when the same subject came up at an official reception in the posh Sovietskaya Hotel.

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* *Zagon* also connotes persecution or oppression.

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"You see, *Gaspadin* Boyd," began one of the editors of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. "At first they said that the Soviet economic system was bound to fail...."

I thought he must have changed his mind and decided not to talk about Pasternak at all. But no; about twelve minutes later his monologue, having disposed of various slanderous accusations by the enemies of the Soviet Union, came round to literature at last.

"And now, *kak izvestno*, they have to fall back on saying that we are restricting freedom of thought. That is, of course, equally false."

I tried to break in and ask if he meant they were actually going to let Russians read *Zhivago*, but my literary lion swept on, leaving me feeling like Queen Victoria so often did when addressed by Mr. Gladstone. Pasternak, he said (I am skipping the details), complained that the revolution had destroyed all the intelligent people and left nothing but animals; and now—triumph gleamed in those bulging eyes—these animals had shown that they could launch sputniks. Collapse of Pasternak, as Mr. Punch would have put it in the period to which my lion was evidently attuned spiritually. I thanked him politely, and escaped.

Supping that night with some much more human Soviet journalists, I mentioned this incident and asked what they thought of my literary lion. "An old gramophone!" This verdict met with ribald approval all around. These were not merely younger men deriding an elder who had reached Professor Parkinson's "Age of Obstruction." They were genuinely interested in good writing, and fed up with the ageing clique of third-raters that lays down Moscow's literary laws.

A Thousand Times Right

On the face of things, Soviet literary life looks impressive, if only quantitatively; there are, to begin with, a dozen very solid literary periodicals, each printing new prose and poetry as well as reviews and critical and biographical studies. It becomes less impressive when one learns how the juggernaut Writers' Union, bossed by Mr. Alexei Surkov, the former poet, controls these journals through a system of interlocking boards.

In fairness to Mr. Surkov, one must admit that his verse is still appearing. Here is a recent sample, in the authorised translation:

Once more my memory takes me far in flight
Along the roads of Peace, and, soaring over,
I see the salt surf spray against the white
Historic cliffs, the chalky cliffs of Dover.

I see the desert, simoom-swept, that lies
Between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers;
I see stern Caledonia's pale-blue skies,
Through which the golden sunset faintly quivers;

And crag-lined Bothnia comes into view;
I hear the thund'ring Alpine avalanche.
O Motherland! the friendship's roads that you
Have sent us on—how far they branch!

A mere glance at the lists of contributors and editors in *Novy Mir*, *Znamya*, *Zvezda*, *Moskva*, and the other horses from Mr. Surkov's monopolistic stable suggests excessive inbreeding. As well as the Surkovs and Turkovs, the numerous Leontievs and Dementievs, there seem to be a lot of dependable familiars like A. Dymshytz, who is on the board of *Zvezda* and contributes weighty studies on, say, the theory of socialist realism in literature to the Union's other organs too.

The Dementiev-Dymshytz school, if I may coin a term, now shows a marked tendency to work in, from time to time, some new phrase as "N. S. Khrushchev is a thousand times right when he says...." Even when they treat their readers to a touch of, say, Dorothy Parker's astringency (and one would have supposed that Soviet readers could take her biting *Arrangement in Black and White* as it stands), they find it necessary to vouch for Miss Parker's acceptability by mentioning her rôle in the Sacco-and-Vanzetti campaign of 35 years ago.

Namesmanship

Sacco and Vanzetti are commemorated in Moscow by one factory that makes quilting and another that makes pencils. Names are in short supply in this city. Most shops just have numbers. Restaurants, hotels, factories, institutes, cinemas, sports grounds, cars, radios, cigarettes, and canned foods tend to ring rather limited changes on the OK-words of orthodoxy: *Friendship*, *Victory*, *Young Guard*, *Soviet*, *Bolshevik*, *Spartak*, *Pioneer*, *Red Army*, *Red Block*, *Red East*, *Red Way*, *Red Proletarian*, *Red October*, *20th October*, *25th October*, *30th October*, *First of May*; and on appropriate place-names: *Pekin*, *Budapest*, *Bucharest*, *Prague*, *Ukraine*, *Lenin-*

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grad, *Volga*, *Ural*. The Savoy Hotel, an odd relic, is just coming into line with the new name of Berlin. *Lenin*, *Stalin*, *Zhdanov*, *Dzerzhinsky*, *Kalinin*, and *Sverdlov* proliferate. I noticed only one breach of the rule, imposed when the "personality cult" was under fire in 1956, that nothing should be named after a living leader: a refrigerator factory bearing the name of Mr. Anastas Mikoyan.

The Timid Traveller

MOST of the Russians I talked to were longing to travel abroad, but fatalistically sure that they would never be allowed to go. Freedom to travel was only for Top People, or for those who could obtain their favours. I tried to cheer them up, saying that you never know, things might change quite soon. A trickle of Russians of fairly modest middle-class position, young university lecturers and the like, already gets out for approved jaunts. But a lunchtime conversation at the Ararat café with one of them, whom, to spare his blushes, I will call Alexei R., made me fear that the experience of foreign travel which would be so fascinating for so many Russians is largely reserved for such cautious, know-nothing trusties, that it is wasted.

Alexei seemed surprised—as did other Muscovites—to learn of the trouble *Intourist* takes to keep foreigners on its beaten tracks. I explained how any individual visitor had to pay the outrageous charge of £10 a day, and stay in whatever hotel *Intourist* ordered—when there were quite convenient hotels in central Moscow that charged only £2 a day; and how *Intourist* meal coupons limit the foreigner to eating at its approved hotels, unless he is prepared to buy food elsewhere after having paid his basic £10. Alexei could hardly believe this, until I demonstrated it by offering the Ararat my coupons and having them rejected. Then, to my surprise, he made a half-hearted defence of the system. He was the only Russian I met who did—apart from the *Intourist* panjandrums themselves, whose stock explanation: "You must understand, it is a *complex* service," unfortunately disarmed me by its unintended humour whenever I was getting really fed up with their obstructive tactics.

"But, when I travelled in England," said Alexei, "I was perfectly content with the arrangements made for me. I didn't want to go anywhere else."

"Suppose you had wanted to? Here, for instance, I'd have liked to go to Leningrad, just to look around; but I can't, they won't even let me go there for one day. Wouldn't you be annoyed if you were in London, and were forbidden to visit Edinburgh?"

Alexei looked nervous. "But surely that's the same in all countries? Anyway, I didn't want to go."

I met other Russians, including one or two *Intourist* officials, who genuinely seemed to believe that you could not possibly just get on a train and travel from, say, London to Manchester without getting an official *propusk* and showing it when you bought your ticket.

Taxis and Amnesties

A SURVIVOR of fifteen years in the Arctic prison camps around Vorkuta provided me with an ingenious explanation of the wild driving of some of Moscow's taxi-drivers. Thousands of camp officers have lost their jobs, he pointed out, with the closing down of so many camps in recent years; and many of them, after twenty or more years of lording it at Vorkuta or along the Kolyma, have proved quite incapable of holding down any other official job of equivalent status and salary. So—my friend's eyes twinkled—while their wives have to buckle down to household chores that were formerly done for them by relays of university professors and other unfortunates, the fallen petty tyrants are reduced to such jobs as driving lorries—or taxis.

That might certainly explain the bloodthirsty way some of these drivers charge through pedestrian crossings. When Moscow traffic eventually gets thick enough to fill the great broad empty boulevards, something will have to be done to help the humble pedestrian get across these wide expanses without risk to life and limb.

My friend from Vorkuta was impressively unembittered. He minced no words in his description of the sufferings of the political prisoners, their death rate, the fantastically fabricated charges on which they were sentenced, the petty brutality which extended to the destruction of family photographs and other harmless treasures. But he also dwelt humorously on the less appalling aspects of his experience. It had been a "remarkable education" for him, he said—not with mere irony, but meaning that the best brains in Russia had been flung together in the prison camps and had virtually created universities there. Amnestied prisoners naturally tended to

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have an old-school feeling for one another—except for those who had really collaborated with the Nazis, who were beyond the pale, and who, by a savagely ironic twist in Soviet policy, mostly gained their freedom a year or two before the "politicals." There were those so broken by their long ordeal that they clung to the familiar camp as being the only place in the world where they now understood how to live; but those who came back to the cities could and did help an old hut-mate whenever they met.

I heard more about this old-boy network from others later. It sounded as if some at least among the camp survivors were now the freest spirits in Russia. Having learnt the ropes of Soviet life in the hardest possible school, they were now using their painfully-won knowledge to blind and baffle the slow-witted bureaucracy that cowed their fellow citizens.

The Psychiatrist

AFTER only a few days in Moscow, I felt I understood why the new classified telephone directory for the city shows on its flyleaf, in big black letters, the emergency number to ring to get the "psychiatrist on duty." (It is I.1.42.91, if anybody wishes to have it.) Sometimes, even for the hardened resident, it must be an unbearably frustrating place, in both large things and small; and the forces making for acute schizophrenia are powerful.

Telephoning is itself a frustrating business, with no proper directory—and practically no switchboards, so that the various people working in one office all have separate numbers, and you have to collect and note them all one by one. The button-lipped newspapers, which feel they have fulfilled their norm when they have given you Mr. Khrushchev's latest speech, the "court circular" recording his formal activities, two or three articles of a theoretical or exhortatory type, and perhaps an item or two of actual news grudgingly put in to complete the back page, drive some Russians to express their gratitude for even the London *Daily Worker* or *l'Humanité*, from which they can glean a bit more information. The creakingly slow mechanism of most shops drives many upper-class families to hire old swaddle-legged babushkas —not so much to help around the home as to take on the long grind of daily shopping. For the masses, I would suppose one of the most maddening things is having to share an inadequate kitchen with two or three other families; separate kitchenettes are one of the best features about the thousands of new one-room homes now being built out at Cheremushki and elsewhere. For all except the Top People—perhaps for them too, sometimes—there is the exasperating, if understandable, fear of taking on any responsibility that besets the bureaucracy and holds everything up. Half of life is waiting: waiting in shops and restaurants; waiting for a car, motor-cycle, or TV set for maybe a year or two; waiting for a better flatlet (at least you can now see them being built at top speed, but it will be years before Moscow's tenements and shanty-towns are cleared); waiting for each volume in a set of collected works to which you have subscribed; waiting for permits, waiting for slow-arriving news. Russians are patient people, but you notice that even they fret sometimes.

As to schizoid tendencies—there is the pride in national achievements that struggles with underlying belief that practically everything foreign is better. There is the warm hospitable instinct that must still struggle with visible nervousness about all strangers. Muscovites whom I had never met before were pouring out their thoughts within half an hour. Two Russians whom I had known in the West, and who had been perfectly happy to talk to me in London or New York, greeted me in Moscow with the worried question: "How did you find out where I was?"

The foreign visitor himself is liable to develop a split mind much faster than the Muscovite. Repelled at first by the clumsy official attempts to limit your field of vision to the city's Soviet showpieces, you may end up with a personal affection for the frowsty bookshops of the Kuznetsky Most and the quiet back-streets north and south of the Arbat. Maddened by the *chinovnichesky* blocking tactics of officialdom, you may recover your temper in the friendly crowd in a bus. Oppressed by the outward show of "monolithic" conformity, you are correspondingly relieved when those long rambling conversations late into the Moscow night reveal so much stubborn individuality.

Soviet Man, when abroad in his official capacity, had always put me off by his bragging mannerisms, his unbelievable ignorance of the outside world, his carapace of dogma, his lack of curiosity and of interest in exchanging ideas. The average Muscovite, on his home ground, seemed to me enchantingly different: modest, inquisitive, human, talkative, open to new ideas. And I had not expected to spend so much of my

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time in Moscow reassuring people that some aspects of their way of life were now "not too bad" by western standards.

Nor had I fully reckoned, on the other hand, with the really oppressive sense of being cut off from the outside world. A week on a liner, with those little news bulletins you get at breakfast, leaves you feeling far less out of touch than a week in Moscow—however earnestly you may toil through the newspapers in search of some clue to what is really happening. Russians who have never known anything else may not feel this Tibetan isolation so strongly. Russians who have, however, do—and for them there is none of the foreigner's comforting knowledge that he will soon be on a plane again, winging his way towards a free press.

I confess my mouth was almost watering when the Sabena stewardess brought round a rich choice of newspapers the moment we had taken off from Moscow airport. Again I was seated next to a Soviet official; but on this return journey most of my companions were westerners, and we had all fallen into a slightly hilarious, end-of-term mood as we got past the final checking of *dokumenti* at the very foot of the steps up to the aircraft. I had an odd sense of abrupt decompression—a feeling that reminded me of how deep-sea divers have to come up in slow stages to avoid getting the "bends." I was "out" —the monosyllable conveys all I need to say—and painfully embarrassed by the need to hide my sense of relief lest it should hurt the feelings of my Soviet neighbour.

Weeks later, I still couldn't quite decide whether I should ever want to go back or not. Perhaps Moscow will always remain for me the capital of the split mind.

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Caroline Freud

Portrait of the Beatnik

Letter from California

ALMOST every day in some newspaper or magazine, the American Housewife makes her new complaint. A Beatnik philosopher has told her that she lives in "the Age of the White Rhinoceros," and another has told her that it is "the Age of Fried Shoes." "Where," she asks, "is all this Beatnik Movement leading us?" Her question is gratuitous. There has never been a Movement, merely a mirage, merely a masquerade.

The Beatnik is simply a bourgeois fantasy that has become incarnated and incarcerated, in a coffee-house and a "pad"; he is merely the Bohemian in every American business-man that has got out. He is a luxury product, the revolutionary who offers no threat, the nonconformist whose nonconformity is commercial. He shocks and scandalises without creating anxiety; he is the rebel not without cause, but the rebel without repercussion.

Supposedly revolutionary, the "Beatnik Movement" is unique in that it enjoys the recognition, support, and succour of the very society whose dictates it pretends to flout. It has all the trappings of the subversive, the meeting in the darkened cellar, the conspiratorial whisper behind the candle in the chianti bottle, the nihilistic mutter, without the mildest element of subversion. No one in the future, when filling in an official form, will ever be made to swear that they have never been a Beatnik.

The American working man is unconcerned with the Beat Generation and its quest for "the primitive Beginnings." The Beatnik scandalises and interests only the middle-class public from which he springs. As opposed to the Bum (who might well be said to be more truly Beat) he is quite popular. He presents no obvious social incitement or question. He is "cool" and polite. Whereas the Bum rolls in the streets of downtown Los Angeles, drunk and cursing, the Beatnik sits peacefully in his coffee-house, nonconforming over capuccino, a safely-licensed anarchist. Everyone knows where to find him: he is always in his Beatnik Joint or in his "pad." Everyone knows who he is because of his beard, and *Life* Magazine can photograph him whenever it wishes.

Unlike the delinquent (with whom he is often confused), the Beatnik only ever troubles the Police over the technical issue of whether or not, if he reads his own poem to Jazz in a coffee-house, it constitutes "entertainment" and therefore invokes the need for an entertainment licence.

THE Beatnik in his bold rebellion against American Bourgois Values, is about as dangerous as the three revolutionaries in Orwell's *1984*. Like them, he has been put by the State safely in front of a chess-set in the Chestnut Tree Café, and there he is allowed to sit being revolutionary.

The Beat Generation has declared that it will take no part in the "middle-class rat race"; it has protested "a sacred dedication to poverty"; it has denounced all Western civilisation as "square shuck" (phoney).

A popular misconception is that the term "Beatnik" signifies one who is *beat* in the sense of "down beat", or "licked"—whereas to the Beat Generation it signifies "the beatific one."

The ego-ideal of the Beatnik is the "cool hipster"—the man who sits detached with his own flask in his own hip pocket, the man who is "way out," the man who doesn't "wig" (care), the man who finds beatitude in noncommitment.

The "square" is often not "hip" to the fact

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that despite similarities of dress, the Beatnik is by no means his existentialist predecessor. An obscure Beat philosopher finally clarified this point when he said, "The existentialist cat dug like that the positive answer of nothingness, in the face of nothingness, is positivism—we dig that the positive answer of nothingness, to nothingness, is nothingness—Man, isn't that farther out?"

The Beatnik rejects articulateness, speech involving a conversational commitment constituting lack of "coolness." Paradoxically, therefore, the Beat Generation can only speak in order to say that it will not speak, and Jack Kerouac and Alan Ginsberg who are generally known as the Beat spokesmen, are by very definition, as well as by their success and achievements, non-hipsters.

Ideally, a truly "cool cat" should be *completely* self-contained and therefore *completely* silent. The average Beatnik compromises, however, by speaking in language cut to the maximum. His talk, an abbreviated version of already abbreviated Jazz talk, amounts to complete code. A "T.O.," for example, is a much-used Beat word for a rich society woman who questions prostitutes, with half-thrilled envy, about the physical mechanics of their trade. An amateur hipster might be trapped into thinking that a "T.O." was an initiate, for it derives from "To be turned out," meaning initiated, deriving from "To be turned on," referring to "On pot," which stems in turn from "on the pod" of marijuana. The expression is now, however, *only* used to describe not the initiate but the would-be but too-afraid initiate. It is often claimed by the Beatniks that many women living in Park Avenue pent-houses, and many wives of successful movie stars living in Beverly Hills mansions, are secret "T.O.'s" in regard to Beat.

NO PROFESSOR of semantics could be more severe about misuse of vernacular than the hipster. The charlatan can be spotted instantly, and denounced as a "square." He often, for example, makes incorrect use of the term "to ball" which (in the 'forties) meant to make love. Now, however, the expression "I balled the cat" could only mean to the truly Beat, that you were grateful to someone, so grateful in fact that you would only have *liked* to have balled them in the old-fashioned sense.

Beatific talk is the very soul of brevity, if not wit. It is deliberately functional, for the hipster rejects euphemism. He "sets a scene" when he tells, "wigs" when he's worried, "gigs" when he works, "bugs" when he's annoyed, "wails" when he functions, "floats" when he's drunk, "grazes" when he's content, "bends" when he's tired, "scenes" when he arrives, "splits" when he goes.

The Beatnik, in his rejection of the popular American concept that Success equates with Manhood, stresses a non-virility often mistaken for homosexuality. He is essentially a-sexual. Once again the ideal of the "cool" precluding the personal commitment demanded by sexual activity. He has, however, no particular objection to sexual intercourse as long as it is conducted quickly, clinically, and above all wordlessly. The Beat "cat" approaches the Beat "chick" with the ritualistic "Pad me"—his "Pad" being his home where he keeps his foam rubber mattress. The "chick" can either reply "Dig" (a sign of cool acquiescence), or otherwise she can merely snap "Drop!" (a much-used abbreviation of "Drop dead"). In reverse, the "chick's" approach to the male is equally formalised; she must say "I'm frigid," to which he can either reply "I'll make you wail" (function) or, otherwise, "Don't bug."

Despite his rejection of marriage as middle-class "shuck" (phoney), the Beatnik's Wedding is an important event in any Beat community. He marries in the Ocean, only at midnight. He and his Beat Bride-to-be stand naked in the waves while the rites are performed by a Beatific friend who reads a self-composed hymeneal ritual poem, which is then followed by a lunar incantation. The Bridegroom then silently hands the "chick" a ring of flowers which she must throw into the waves in order to symbolise that her hipster is giving himself to "The real mama, the Ocean, the mama of the whole race of Man," but she is herself uniting with "The Old Man of the Sea."

Non-Beatnik grandmothers and aunts are invited to attend these services, and often leave in tears before the wedding breakfast, which naturally takes place in a "pad" and is as formal as the Sea Wedding. The newly-weds sit in a semi-circle composed of silently contemplative friends, "light up on muggles" (smoke marijuana), and continue their search for "the inner luminous experience."

BEAT philosophy is misty, mystical, and eclectic. Claiming to embrace Zen, the Beatnik philosopher paradoxically rejects discipline; he therefore replaces the Zen Ideal of a total commitment to the moment by a Beat ideal

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of a striving towards a state of totally non-committed contemplation. As a result he often merely arrives at a condition very similar to the one in which the American Housewife watches her television.

He prefers Jung to Freud, the concept of the collective, as opposed to the personal, sub-conscious being *"cooler"* in the sense that it predisposes less commitment to self. Other influences on his thought have been St. Francis of Assisi, Nietzsche, Ouspenski, and St. John of the Cross. He admires Joyce for his obscurity.

Within the confines that he has set himself, the Beatnik adheres to his conventions of non-conventionality with the enthusiasm of the Rotarian Club member for his rules. Every hipster wears the strict uniform of classical Bohemianism. He is heavily bearded. He has an open sandal, a chunky raw-wool sweater, and a little leather cap with a button on it. All his clothes *must* be bought second-hand. A similar Beat regulation is that his "pad" or mattress must be acquired *only* from the Salvation Army. Beds are considered "square" so it must therefore be put straight on the floor of his "pad" which is also his home, and ideally should be a battered shack. He must also hand-paint his floor-boards with enigmatic and abstract (*"way-out"*) designs, for one of his slogans is *"In the meaningless lies the meaning."*

The true Beatnik should never "hustle" (do any paid work). He must sleep all day and only emerge by night. In the corner of every Beat "pad" there must necessarily be a gigantic stack of unwashed dishes.

As a deliberate reaction against the Hollywood emphasis on the breast and the flashing lipsticked smile, the appearance of the female Beatnik is characterised by a studied and aggressive a-sexuality. Pale-lipped and unsmiling she sits in a high-necked shapeless tunic made of woven wool. Her legs must always be crossed and heavily encased in black woolly stockings. Her cheeks are whitened with thick, white make-up base, her hair hangs dank and darkly jagged. She is to be seen nightly alone, staring over an unplayed chess-game with a mystic and heavily mascara'd eye.

In order to ensure the correct attire of visitors, many a Beatnik coffee-house has an adjoining dress shop: a Beatnik boutique. There, on sale, are elaborately-designed thirty-dollar Beat Generation tunics made of raw Mexican wool, sackcloth shirts, primitive leather water-pouches, and Beat jewellery made of iron.

I spoke with an ex-Beatnik turned Beat dress designer. She sat in her work-shop and sewed the thong on a raw-hide sandal. She spoke of her Beat past with the apologetic nostalgia sometimes found in retired members of the Communist Party. "Jesus, I dug Beatific—Man, the swinginest [it's the best]—I like dug splittin' [I felt obliged to leave it]—I dug giggin' for bread to wail [I was obliged to work for the money to go on functioning]...."

Her friend, another renegade Beatnik, who was sitting in the corner painting papier-maché model figurines of Beatniks (later to be sold in a Beat boutique) was less enthusiastic about the Movement. "Beatific's a bug," she said.

THE Beat coffee-houses are characterised by their extreme gloom, and by their cathedral silences. They attract not only the hipster but also the wandering psychotic who gets mistaken for Beat because he is "way out." They also shelter two unfortunate by-products of Beat. Firstly, the Bogus Beatnik: the Hollywood agent and the successful car-salesman, who, having worked by day go corruptly Beat by night. Secondly, the hypocritical hipster, who, unaware of the deeper philosophical significance of the Movement, has taken out "Beat" as he might take out an insurance policy, merely to protect himself against any future censor from a success-worshipping society. Failure is impossible to anyone who is Beat, for they have rejected aspiration.

The entertainment at the Beat coffee-house consists of "Prose and Poetry readings" and folk-singing, the latter being part of the quest for the "primitive beginnings." No alcohol is served, for the Beatnik rejects "lushing" (drinking) as part of bourgeois "shuck."

Short, silent, home-made Beat movies are also shown. As there would appear to be only a limited number of these films, the more popular and "farther out" ones are shown up to four or five times on the same night. An old man looms upon the screen, huge and fearful. The camera remains lengthily upon the vast cigar which he holds between his teeth. An adolescent appears, white-faced and knuckle-clenching, his eyes roll, his face contorts. The Jazz background music mounts to a crescendo. The boy splits a gut (laughs), he lifts his hand, and with a sudden, frenzied violence, strikes the cigar from the old man's mouth. The camera follows the cigar which rolls in the dust. The old man shivers. He rocks, holding his head in agony. He staggers

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to a lavatory. He vomits. The camera remains upon the lavatory pan until it slowly dissolves into a vagina. The audience slowly turn their heads to see if everyone else is "hip." A voice always says, "Dig that crazy sequence!"

Between the runnings of films, Beatific poem-reading takes place to the accompaniment of Bongo drums.

The take-off
on one
and
a half
push up
not all
at once
just cool
hip.

The unsuspecting tourist suffering from the "square" illusion that it is possible to drop in at a coffee-house for only a few minutes, then becomes "hip" to his error. Once "Beat readings" are in progress only someone with the courage or the insensitivity that would enable him to leave the front pew of an Anglican church while the parson is delivering his Easter sermon, can even conceive of making an exit under the condemnatory scrutiny of the Beatific congregation's culturally pious eye.

The tourist often finds towards dawn (for there is an important Beat tenet: *"Night sleep is for Squares"*) that after a whole evening on capuccino and "Modigliani's" (described on Beat menus as "Murals of ham and gherkin on rye"), he is slowly becoming "cooler and cooler," and "further and further out."

The "entertainment" often ends with a famous Beat musician, Lord Buckley, giving a nasal rendering of the story of Jesus of Nazareth walking on the waters. *And der Naz said, "Walk cool, Baby, walk cool...."*

Ever since the publication of *On the Road*, which focused upon the Beatnik a furore of public interest and attention, Jack Kerouac's right to the title of "Father of the Beat Generation" has been jealously contested. Kenneth Rexroth, an elderly and obscure San Franciscan poet, made the first violent attempt to secure the title for himself when he protested angrily to the Press that he had been living all his life "the kind of life that Kerouac just writes about."

Another far more powerful figure then emerged in the form of a lesser-known (and therefore "cooler") poet named Lawrence Lipton. A man approaching sixty, he denounced Kerouac for being in his 'thirties, and therefore unfitted to represent the Beat Generation who were essentially a product of the 1950's. He was appointed "Grand Lama" in Venice West, a slum area of Los Angeles, where there are many suitably Beat and dilapidated shacks, and he is now hoping to establish it as the new Beat World Capital.

I spoke with the "Grand Lama," he reclined on his "pad" Pasha-like and smoked a cigar. "Our pad," he said, "has the same symbolical importance to us, as did the couch to the Bohemians of the 'thirties. Beat, you will understand, my dear young woman, is far more than a religion. Beat, my dear young lady, is a way of Life."

He closed his eyes.

"Here, down in Venice West," he continued, "we have a new kind of Beat, the real Beat, the Beat Generation of the future. I have called them by their true title, *The Holy Barbarians*, and the report that I have just finished making about them will be called by that very name. I have already received extensive enquiries about it, not only from the Book-of-the-Month Club, but also from several television programmes, the M.-G.-M. Studios, and many anthropologists from U.C.L.A. I tell you all this, you will understand, merely so that you will really grasp how big this whole thing is. Already my poems are being scribbled on the lavatory walls of New York, already our Movement is spreading to Japan, Italy, France, Germany, and Great Britain. The Holy Barbarians, you will see, my dear young woman, will very soon be of world-wide interest!"

We had a long silence.

"I," he continued, speaking with a slow and portentous solemnity, "am the Mentor of the Holy Barbarians. They call me *The Shaman of the Tribe*. I interpret their way of life to the public. I have probably made more tape-recordings of Beatnik conversations than any other living man." He languidly waved his hand at a mountainous stack of tape spools lying on his floor. "There," he said, "you have one hundred hours' worth of authentic Beat conversations, private philosophic conversations, you understand, taking place in simple pads, amongst young and simple people, but ones who are asking, more profoundly, more honestly than any previous generation, who they are, and where they are going...."

Once again he closed his eyes. "We, the Holy Barbarians, finding nothing in the West, have

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turned towards the East. We reject your Audens and your Spenders and all their affiliations. Our poets' Search goes inwards for The Luminous Experience. We reject and scorn your Angry Young Men with their social preoccupations. We seek much further for the non-political Answer." "The Lama" suddenly looked at me with a suspicious, visionary eye. "That does not in the least mean to say," he added quickly, "that we do not utterly reject the Russian way of life. We in fact even have an expression amongst our hipsters, *There's no Square like a red Square*."

Once again we had a silence. "We, the Holy Barbarians, have totally rejected racial barriers," he went on. "We call a negro a *nigger* and a *spade*, for he knows we say the words with Love. You might really describe us in fact as a Community of individuals seeking only for The Beatific Vision, The Experience of Holiness, The Orgiastic Fulfilment, in Self. Our hipsters would say that we seek only *to flip our wings*.

"I'm afraid," he said, suddenly smiling with scornful patronage, "that that will have very little meaning to you.

"We," he continued, making heavy use of the Papal *we*, "might well be compared to the Early Christians. We are the Outlaws from the Social Lie. We are the Persecuted People, the Apocalyptic People, the Nocturnal People. The people of the night," he added, for fear I had not understood.

As I was leaving, "The Lama" stood in the doorway of his shack. "We have many, many Artists down here in Venice West," he said, "all of them living in dedicated poverty. Some of them are among the most creative talents in America. I should very much like you to have a look at them. I will telephone you as soon as I have arranged to have you shown round their pads." Suddenly I became cool, visionary. I saw that "The Lama" had already, mystically, ruthlessly, appointed my future Duties. He had ordained how my life from then on was to be spent. Like a Florence Nightingale. Or a conscientious Inspector of an Insane Asylum. Making daily rounds of condemned Artists in padded cells.

Life and Art

For Denis Lowson

"A cell," I reply when visitors remark
On the small high windows of the room I work in,
A room without a view. "Exactly what I need,
Daylight enough—no more—to push a pen by,
And no distractions. Even the two great elms
With their congregations, race riots and social conflicts,
Endless commotion of squirrels, jackdaws and owls
Not to be seen, and only seldom heard."

You dropped in one morning and sketched the garden,
All blue and black with the bulk and shade of those elms.
At once I longed to possess it. (The garden, the sketch?)
And above my desk I pinned up the silence extracted
From the endless commotion of squirrels, jackdaws and owls.
My garden hangs on the wall—and no distractions.

Michael Hamburger

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Philip Larkin

The Whitsun Weddings

That Whitsun, I was late getting away:
  Not till about
One-twenty on the sunlit Saturday
Did my three-quarters-empty train pull out,
All windows down, all cushions hot, all sense
Of being in a hurry gone. We ran
Behind the backs of houses, crossed a street
Of blinding windscreens, smelt the fishdock; thence
The river's level drifting breadth began,
Where sky and Lincolnshire and water meet.

All afternoon, through the tall heat that slept
  For miles inland,
A slow and stopping curve southwards we kept.
Wide farms went by, short-shadowed cattle, and
Canals with floatings of industrial froth;
A hothouse flashed, uniquely; hedges dipped
And rose; and now and then a smell of grass
Displaced the reek of buttoned carriage-cloth
Until the next town, new and nondescript,
Approached with acres of dismantled cars.

At first, I didn't notice what a noise
  The weddings made
Each station that we stopped at: sun destroys
The interest of what's happening in the shade,
And down the long cool platforms whoops and skirls
I took for porters larking with the mails
And went on reading. Once we started, though,
We passed them, grinning and pomaded, girls
In parodies of fashion, heels and veils,
All posed irresolutely, watching us go,

As if out on the end of an event
  Waving goodbye
To something that survived it. Struck, I leant
More promptly out next time, more curiously,

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And saw it all again in different terms:
The fathers with broad belts under their suits
And seamy foreheads; mothers loud and fat;
An uncle shouting smut; and then the perms,
The nylon gloves and jewellery-substitutes,
The lemons, mauves, and olive-ochres that

Marked off the girls unreally from the rest.
  Yes, from cafés
And banquet-halls up yards, and bunting-dressed
Coach-party annexes, the wedding-days
Were coming to an end. All down the line
Fresh couples climbed aboard; the rest stood round;
The last confetti and advice were thrown,
And, as we moved, each face seemed to define
Just what it saw departing: children frowned
At something dull; fathers had never known

Success so huge and wholly farcical;
  The women shared
The secret like a happy funeral;
While girls, gripping their handbags tighter, stared
At a religious wounding. Free at last,
And loaded with the sum of all they saw,
We hurried towards London, shuffling gouts of steam.
Now fields were building-plots, and poplars cast
Long shadows over major roads, and for
Some fifty minutes, that in time would seem

Just long enough to settle hats and say
  I nearly died
A dozen marriages got under way.
They watched the landscape, sitting side by side
—An Odeon went past, a cooling tower,
And someone running up to bowl—and none
Thought of the others they would never meet
Or how their lives would all contain this hour.
I thought of London spread out in the sun,
Its postal districts packed like squares of wheat:

There we were aimed. And as we raced across
  Bright knots of rail
Past standing Pullmans, walls of blackened moss
Came close, and it was nearly done, this frail
Travelling coincidence; and what it held
Stood ready to be loosed with all the power
That being changed can give. We slowed again,
And as the tightened brakes took hold, there swelled
A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower
Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain.

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Walter Z. Laqueur

After the Revolution in Iraq

"He is a Victorian, more up-to-date than most of our own intellectuals. . . ."
SIR HAROLD NICOLSON, *reviewing* SIR JOHN GLUBB'S *"Britain and the Arabs."*

A RECENT account* of the fate of the young King of Iraq and his Prime Minister reminds one of a famous passage of Burke's, recalling his feelings at the sight of the Dauphine at Versailles ("surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision"). There is the same tone of lament for the eclipse of an age of chivalry, of graceful life and manners and of heroic enterprise; the same accent of contempt for the sophists, economists, and calculators who have taken over (though the villains now go by different names). It is a melancholy account: in Baghdad, no more than in Paris, did ten thousand swords leap from their scabbards to the rescue of the old order. Not that this kind of historical parallel will stand much examination; Lord Birdwood is not Burke and an analogy between France and Iraq would border on the absurd.

But a revolution there was, and one that had begun well before that July morning of 1958. Several years ago I tried to put on paper certain observations about this; and they eventually became a book which was, on the whole, courteously received by critics. They took it seriously, though the ideas it developed were not shared by many at the time. "The conclusion drawn," said the *Times*, "is that some Arab countries are moving slowly but steadily towards Communism. This gloomy reflection needs qualifying by the thought that Arab countries, whether moving slowly or fast, seldom get far from their moorings. . . ." What part of the Arab world in particular seemed vulnerable? There was one passage which provoked much contradiction, and since it was quoted by several critics it may bear repetition here:

> Of all the Arab countries, Iraq arouses the strongest feelings of pessimism . . . the government has antagonised most of the population, including the entire middle class, which is now willing to make common cause with the Communist fronts in order to overthrow the hated autocracy. The parallel with Czarist Russia is uncomfortably obvious. At the time of writing, Communism in Iraq continues to be "under control"—but it will not remain so for many years, perhaps not even for many months. Nor will the strengthening of the Army and the police preserve the régime indefinitely: even the best arms in the world are of no avail if the soldiers refuse to obey. The present régime is doomed; by clinging to power long enough it may make Communism the only alternative.

Commenting on this in the *Sunday Times*, the late Sir David Kelly said that a recent Eastern tour had given him a different impression. Mr. Richard Crossman, in the *New Statesman*, was also sceptical: "Such cocksure predictions are unconvincing. Of course they *may* come true; but I should have more confidence in Mr. Laqueur's judgment if he had been able to visit Iraq recently and paint the other side of the picture." The most emphatic objector was the then editor of the *Middle East Forum*, a monthly published in Beirut: quoting the offending passage in full, he added that if the author of it were right in his analysis, "then the State Department, the British Foreign Office, and every Western observer this reviewer has talked to are wrong." To read that now is to feel highly flattered, but unfortunately it was not quite fair to the Foreign Ministries mentioned nor to the other nameless observers (quite a few shared my pessimism). The Foreign Office and the State Department had their misgivings but also responsibilities; they lack the private citizen's freedom to play a public Cassandra.

* *Nuri as Said*. By LORD BIRDWOOD. Cassell, 30s.

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STUDENTS of world affairs tend to recall those views and predictions which subsequent events confirm, and to forget the rest. That is a temptation to be resisted; it is surely more useful to re-examine one's views as a whole. There were new trends emerging in 1952–3 which could not be clearly discerned or correctly interpreted at the first stage of their development. Assumptions that seemed valid in 1954–5 have had to be modified in the light of later events. Thus, it is difficult enough to define "Nasserism" now—and it was an even more intricate matter four or five years ago. Middle Eastern revolutions have a logic and style of their own: comparisons with what is developing elsewhere are frequently less instructive than misleading. Nasser is not Kemal Ataturk—nor is he Hitler, Mussolini, Khrushchev, Garibaldi, Cardenas, Mossadeq, Cavour, or Benes. He is simply Gamal Abdul Nasser, leader of one wing of Arab nationalism; and his movement is to be understood, not in comparison with Liberalism, Fascism, or Communism, but by reference to the state of the Arab world.

One was tempted in 1954 to underrate the impact of "Nasserism." The agrarian reform had affected only a small percentage of Egyptian peasants; it directly benefited only a few thousand families. But the power of the great landowners had been broken—a factor of far-reaching political and social consequence. The social implication of July 23rd, 1952, is now more obvious than it was: it cleared the path to power of a new class, what the Russians like to call (somewhat awkwardly) the "military intelligentsia."

Nasser's foreign political successes gave an enormous lift to the Arab national movement. At home, the new régime established hundreds of new schools; it abolished antiquated titles, and carried out extensive improvements in the ancient capital; it did more than any Egyptian government had done for many a year. Were not these achievements in themselves enough to justify Nasser's policy and lay a firm foundation for the new régime? Unfortunately "Nasserism," which in some form might have been a great success in some parts of Latin America, has to cope with Egypt's peculiar geographical situation and its economic and social handicaps. Nasser's promises of a radical and rapid transformation of Egyptian society are desperately difficult to fulfil, nor can he have much hope of temporising and "muddling through"; the new forces unleashed in the Arab world are too strong, the pressure of unsolved economic and social problems too overwhelming.

In 1955 Nasser was blamed for "turning away from internal reform," for his increasing preoccupation with an "activist" foreign policy; but given his basic aims and intentions—was there really a feasible alternative for him? His Egypt really was, unlike Hitler's Germany, *Volk ohne Raum*; what with the lack of cultivable land, the absence of raw materials for heavy industry, and the "population-explosion" (a birth-surplus of half a million a year), there was no easy way to solve Egypt's difficulties within Egypt. Lenin's Russia in 1917, Mao's China in 1948—these were "underdeveloped" countries with unlimited agricultural and industrial potential. One may doubt whether even a Stalin could have succeeded in Cairo. Here there was no margin of "primitive accumulation" to conscript for capital; the peasants vegetated at subsistence level and nothing could be squeezed out of them for industrialisation. All available land was in use, and no mere "redistribution" of it could solve the country's economic problem. This is not recalled as an apologia for Nasser's policy after 1955. But it suggests that he may have thought that policy inevitable, even apart from the momentum (and the popular appeal) of the drive for Arab unity which was propelling him deeper into foreign affairs and towards the establishment of a Middle Eastern "co-prosperity sphere."

The language of the Egyptian leaders and the Cairo press after 1955 was rather frightening. No one took it quite at face value, but many of us discounted it too little. Egyptian press comment had been strident stuff for the previous fifty years; and moderation was distinctly unfashionable after 1952. The normal Egyptian writer's or speaker's way of saying they did not like Israel was that they would "drive the Jews into the sea." No doubt they would have liked to do so. But they also knew that the military prospects of such an operation would be slight. In retrospect, it seems more than doubtful whether they ever seriously contemplated a full-scale attack upon Israel. But the verbal threat *was* taken seriously, and it did lead to a preventive war. Without the Israeli invasion of Sinai there would, of course, have been no Anglo-French intervention; and how Middle Eastern affairs might then have developed is of merely speculative interest. From the Western point of view the Suez fiasco looks like an unmitigated disaster, yet in reality it only precipitated a pro-

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cess that might otherwise have taken a little longer—the loss of certain positions in Egypt and other Arab countries.

For Nasser, to be sure, the Suez expedition was the greatest boon of his whole career. If he has any chance at all to compete with the Communists, he owes it to his "victory" over Britain, France, and Israel. Only after the humiliation of the invaders did he become (at least for a time) undisputed leader of the Arab world: the very symbol and incarnation of Arab unity and anti-colonialism. That England, France, and Israel should have made this decisive contribution to the prestige of Gamal Abdul Nasser is a striking instance of what Hegel called "the cunning of reason."

THE Leipzig trial, in 1930, of several young *Reichswehr* officers charged with Nazi activities created a mild sensation in Germany at that time. But it had a sequel perhaps worth recalling to-day. In prison, some of these men (notably Lieutenants Scheringer and Wendt) turned into militant Communists; others became fanatical Nazis. (One of the latter, Ludin, became *Gauleiter* in Slovakia during World War II and was hanged by the Czechs in 1946.) What made Scheringer a Communist and Ludin a Nazi? Here were two young officers of the same age, the same social origin, the same outlook upon most things in life, and of similar mental and emotional make-up. Aren't such decisions largely accidental? There are probably private rivalries and hidden motives, and different appraisals of what each thinks is "the wave of the future."*

It is just as difficult, I think, to ascertain why the Iraqi colonels came out in favour of a Communist orientation while their Cairo colleagues championed the cause of "integral Arab nationalism." Both groups have, basically, so much in common that such opposition seems at first sight incomprehensible. The Baghdad Communists are at the same time Nationalists at heart; and the "integral nationalists" are not at all averse to Communism (provided it does not affect their own monopoly of power). One could, in the cases of Iraq and Egypt, easily adduce a number of historical reasons, but the political decision probably depends, in the last analysis, upon various imponderables.

There is as yet no satisfactory description and analysis of the whole complex of relations between Nationalism and Communism in the newly-independent countries of Asia and Africa. The clash between them in the Arab world to-day is by no means *sui generis*—problems that are not dissimilar confront the Congress in India, the Istiqlal in Morocco, and the Apristas in Peru. The notion that Nationalism and Communism are somehow "the same thing" is held by few outside Pretoria and Buluwayo, and we need waste no time refuting an idea no thinking person could seriously defend. But more prevalent and equally dangerous is the opposite fallacy—namely, the assumption that in Asia and Africa, Nationalism and Communism are basically different and irreconcilable, bound to come into conflict in the struggle for power. Usually implicit in this is the idea that Nationalism is deeper and stronger than Communism; so that, if only the West would "play the right cards" and support the good Nationalists, they would prevail against the bad Communists. As if Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi-minh were not in their way very good nationalists, as if Nasser were somehow more nationalist than the Iraqi Communists!

Much discussion of Middle Eastern developments is bewitched by outworn Continental clichés. Whether the traditional division between left and right continued to make sense even in Europe after the emergence of totalitarian régimes is a moot point. But to talk about a "growth of left-wing influence" in Iraq is simply misleading. To us in the West it has overtones of 1789, 1848, democracy, liberalism, socialism, and all sorts of humanist and internationalist movements never experienced in a country like Iraq. In those countries the Communist movement stands for several causes: it is anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, and strongly nationalist; it promises rapid industrialisation and economic planning. If a label is required it could be defined as "radical." But with the traditional causes of the "left" it has very little in common. Similarly misleading is any indiscriminate use of the word "nationalism." Everybody in Asia and Africa is now a *nationalist*—not a single political movement in any of these countries is *internationalist* in the way the early Communists

* There are many such parallels in recent history: One of the leaders of the Brazilian Army Revolt in 1924 (Luis Carlos Prestes) subsequently became the leader of Communism in Brazil; several of his colleagues (Eduardo Gomez, Estillac Leal) became prominent in right-wing politics. Should one really talk about the "enigma" of Kassem (or Nasser)? For a variety of reasons such men can opt one way or the other, for Communism or against it. I find nothing enigmatic about it.

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were. We might as well take this nationalism for granted, and estimate the clash between Nasserism and Communism for what it really is; the struggle for power between two wings in the national movements, each claiming to be the only true and consistent defender of the national interest. To define a leader or a political movement as "nationalist" may not be altogether irrelevant but it is not enlightening. For the pertinent questions remain: What is he in addition to being a nationalist? what is his (or his party's) social and economic programme? what political ideology is he propagating?

It is there that serious investigation must begin. We know something about the ideas of the Communists, but what are those of their rivals in the Arab world? All too often the lack of a clear programme is concealed behind vague phrases and meaningless invocations of the genius of the nation ("Our nationalism will give us the strength to solve all problems. . . ."). The supine acceptance of such platitudes is bad enough in the Middle East (although one can think of extenuating circumstances), but that so many Western observers should have taken them at face value seems inexcusable. It led to widespread misconceptions that are only now being reluctantly discarded.

Consider the appraisals of the Iraqi revolution between July 1958 and March 1959. Our commentators announced that "Nasser's ideas were blossoming out over the Tigris," and the new rulers were greeted as "left-wing democrats," "hard-headed realists." As late as February, one weekly was proving that General Kassem's latest re-shuffle of his government had strengthened the "forces of moderation," and another was complaining of the "smear campaign" against the moderate Socialists (old pupils of Harold J. Laski), the sanest and most business-like political group in Iraq who, it was said, were the chief beneficiaries of the changes. And then suddenly, in the first and second week of April, it happened: Iraq had become a satellite, a Communist country!*

This jump from one extreme to another could have been avoided: the general lines of Iraq's political development should, I feel, have been fairly obvious almost immediately after the revolution last July. In August, writing in *The New Republic*, I took it for granted that nationalist forces (such as the *Istiqlal*) would soon be swept away and that the Communists would emerge as the most powerful party within a year. (The estimate was inaccurate; it took them only half the time.) But such views, however cautiously and conservatively expressed, were dismissed as extremist. Sir John Glubb, in a book published in April 1959, writes:

> Communism is an ideology in which extremely few if any Arabs are seriously interested. Soviet imperialism is the same as the Russian imperialism of the Czars. . . .

The lapidary simplicity of it leaves one speechless. The late Leon Trotsky would have thought it typical of what he called the "innate inability of the Anglo-Saxon political genius to understand a revolutionary situation." Others beside Sir John pronounced opinions not essentially different, interpreting the Baghdad revolution almost exclusively in terms of "nationalism" and "Arab unity," disregarding or underrating the social forces in play, ignoring the dedication, the know-how, and the political sophistication of the Iraqi Communists which made them so superior to all their rivals. One remembers the utter incredulity of the Austrian Socialist leader Victor Adler at the news of the Revolution of October 1917. Messrs. Lenin and Trotsky, whom he had known in the café across the street, could not possibly have become the masters of a country of 130 million people! The Iraqi émigré leaders, too, had been familiar figures in the coffee-houses of Damascus and Cairo (not to mention Vienna and Paris); no one took them very seriously.

How could a party of perhaps two thousand members expect to take power? Lenin used to say, if a few tens of thousands of big landowners

* Some of the Sunday papers continued, however, to deprecate what they thought unduly alarmist reports. "Bluff by Iraq's Communists" ran one headline in the *Sunday Times* (April 19); "the picture created of an triumphant Communist advance" was said to be "misleading," the reports about the People's Resistance Force "untrue and even ridiculous." The *Observer* (April 19) announced that "the situation still appears to be fluid and despite the enigmatic and unpredictable character of the Iraqi Premier General Kassem, the basic temper of Iraq is considered sufficiently Nationalist to justify the hope that the present spread of Communist influence will be checked by other forces. . . ." A long treatise will probably be written one day in explanation of the rare consistency with which so many Western observers underrated the impact of Communism in the Middle East. The most common source of confusion was perhaps the fact that the Communists tried (and in Iraq succeeded) to take over the Nationalist movement *from within*.

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had been able to rule the Russia of the Tsars, why could not an equal number of Communists do the same job? Iraq had been ruled until last July by only several hundred land-owning sheiks and professional politicians; there was at least twice that number of Communists there when the storm broke out. It is true that these were only competitors for the prize of power; matched against them were the various nationalist groups with their clubs and societies who had done much to prepare the revolution. That the latter would retain their lead was the belief of many. But as Chateaubriand once observed, *Les patriciens commencèrent la révolution, les plebeiens l'achevèrent.*

WHAT, then, is the character of the new Iraqi régime, and what policy is it likely to follow? Clearly, it is providing a case of precedent that will be closely watched throughout Asia and Africa.

In important respects the situation in Iraq differs from that in the Popular Democracies of Eastern Europe in 1947. Iraq's new rulers do not benefit by the supporting presence of Soviet Army units. But they have much wider popular support than was enjoyed by Dimitrov, Bierut, or Anna Pauker in their time. Counter-revolution or civil war are not impossibilities, but they have become unlikely. From the point of view of the (Nasserist) movement for Arab unity this is most disastrous. It means, to quote an Egyptian journal,

> that the firing line between the Eastern and Western camps will run through the heart of the Arab nation itself. It will be like the line dividing Eastern and Western Germany, North and South Vietnam, North and South Korea. We have come to learn [says *Rose el Yussef*, April 8th, 1959] that lines of this kind cannot be changed, for such a change would lead to a world war. . . .

This means that the question of Arab unity will be excluded from practical politics for many years; it may well be the beginning of the decline of this movement, whose historical misfortune (like that of Zionism) was to appear upon the international scene some fifty years too late.

Events in Baghdad will be closely watched for yet another reason. It has been argued for some time that Communist rule in a country like Iraq need not necessarily be "total," that what has happened in East Europe will not have to be repeated in the Middle East and Asia. Coalitions between the Communists and some other nationalist elements (mainly military) are conceivable, involving all kinds of deviations from the standard Leninist and Stalinist patterns; and this not as a temporary solution, but for a very long time, perhaps permanently.

What prospects are there for such a development? The Communists in Iraq do not seem to want to take all the power into their own hands at this stage, but prefer a continuation of the present arrangements. Their current programme does not project any radical economic or social changes. For its comparatively modest demands it should not be impossible to gain support outside the Communist camp. Then, too, the course of events in Iraq has already made an unfortunate impression upon Iraq's neighbours. There is a "potential revolutionary situation" in Persia and in Jordan, and after the Iraqi experience the "bourgeois nationalists" (and even the radicals) will think twice before collaborating with the Communists. Why should they court the fate of the Istiqlal, the Ba'ath, and the "National Democrats"? The alliance between the Communists and the non-Communist oppositionists in Jordan has already broken down in consequence of the events in Iraq. The prospects of spreading Communism in the Middle East might well be impaired; a continuation of the present alliance in Baghdad would seem desirable.

Yet there are substantial reasons why one should not count on such a development. If contemporary history (post-Victorian, to be sure) shows anything, it is that the Communist Party has always striven for total power. Could Iraq be the first exception? The Communists may want to continue the coalition for a time, but, ironically enough, their very successes have caused a virtual disappearance of any effective political organisation but their own.* They can

* They are now in the unenviable position of wanting to maintain a "national front" but with nobody left willing and able to do so. One of the Baghdad periodicals referred to "the Chinese example" and suggested that the Communists should employ "independent Rightist elements, not linked to imperialism and feudalism" (*Al Thawrah*, April 9th, 1959). The suggestion is sound, but somewhat impractical. If there are such "rightist independent elements" they would have to be organised by the Communists, just as in East Germany, for instance, a National Democratic party (mainly uniting former Nazis) had to be created by the Communists for lack of initiative by prospective allies. A "National Front" of this kind means hard work; the Communists must not only run their own organisation but also sponsor their various partners and manage their affairs.

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make allies of *individuals*—army officers, foreign or Civil Service specialists, etc.—but there is no organised group left to be taken into political partnership. From now on the Communists will have to invent their partners. The conflict with Egypt, the alleged or real dangers of civil war and/or intervention from abroad: these are so many more reasons for taking over not merely the key positions but all the really responsible ones (for no one but a party member can be trusted once the chips are down, etc.). The realities of power in a country like Iraq differ from those we know in Europe: the Communists are quite likely, in the future, to have to combat chaos and anarchy rather than an organised opposition. They will seek to maintain the Nationalist Coalition as long as it is a convenience; just as they may not nationalise the oilfields until conditions are ripe for a smooth transfer of management. Abrupt nationalisation would injure their own economy more than that of the West—and, meanwhile, why not make the oil companies pay for "socialist reconstruction"?

In view of all this, the likelihood of a real and lasting alliance between the Communist and other Nationalist forces—as distinct from the kind of consortium we see in Peking or in East Berlin—is small. "Popular Democracy" in the Middle East may acquire some special characteristics of its own, different from both the East European and the Far Eastern species. But if this does not affect the Communist party's monopoly of power, nor the position of Iraq towards (or in) the Soviet bloc, we had better not attach undue importance to such differences. If there is to be a really "Nationalist Communism" in Iraq, it will come about *after*, not before, the takeover has been made official and final. For that event would be followed by the traditional and apparently inevitable struggle for power within the Communist leadership. The Iraqi party is certainly strongly Nationalist; and it came to power by its own efforts, without Soviet help. In such circumstances there may be unexpected developments; but that stage may be several years ahead.

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NOTES & TOPICS

A Second Holland?

MR. J. A. LUKACS has some interesting things to say about contemporary Britain in his comment under the heading "A Second Holland is Not Enough" [ENCOUNTER, May]. The picture he draws, however, does not seem to be quite consistent. On the one hand, he finds an "inclination among the best of Englishmen to rest content with the prospects of their country becoming a second Holland," and after admitting how pleasant and civilised life was in the "dignified decline" of Holland in the 18th century points out that "at the tail end of those cosy times the French gobbled up Holland in 1795 in one motion, like soft cream cheese." On the other hand, he finds "bad signs" also in phenomena of revolt among Englishmen against the reduction of their status in the world, such as a "tendency to exaggerate the claims of some kind of neo-Elizabethan revival" and "an un-English bitterness, and on occasion a touch of almost Gallic surliness... when they criticise Americans, Germans, Irish." It might be thought that these latter symptoms would meet with even less approval from a foreign visitor than a graceful, if somewhat too docile, willingness to "learn to dwindle like the Dutch." But Mr. Lukacs is of the opinion that "even the spectacle of a surly and recalcitrant Britain may impress the American people more favourably than all those repetitions about 'the loyal ally,' so often covering up only the gracious subservience of the frayed aristocratic pensioner."

It is always a little difficult for the British to know just what Americans expect of them. But if the Americans and also the nations of Western Europe really like a "surly and recalcitrant Britain," they have certainly been getting plenty of what they want over the last few months. For every one Englishman who contemplates with serenity of mind the prospects of his country becoming a second Holland, there must be a hundred who cannot bear to admit the decline in Britain's relative importance and express their sense of frustration by railing at foreign nations, particularly their allies. For a year now this irritability has taken the form mainly of mordant criticism of France, the German Federal Republic, and the United States, for obstruction of British "leadership" in turning over from "rigidity" to "flexibility" of policy towards the Soviet Union. Moreover, these manifestations of what Mr. Lukacs calls "un-English bitterness" are apparently so unconscious that when after persistent attacks of extreme malevolence on Dr. Adenauer (including comparisons with Hitler) in a large part of the British press, the German Chancellor went so far as to allude in a public speech to this anti-German campaign, British politicians and publicists professed themselves to be at a loss to imagine what he could be referring to. Then, hardly had the press got over its anger against Adenauer for impeding that settlement which the British and the Russians could so easily achieve if they were left to themselves, than a new storm was raised over the "provocation" of Russia by the Americans' refusal to accept the arbitrary and illegal Russian imposition of a "ceiling" on flights to Berlin. At this point, indeed, one newspaper which showed a little more concern for Britain's relations with its allies than most of its contemporaries observed rather plaintively that "there is quite enough to do in patching up differences with Bonn and Paris without opening even minor rents with Washington."

There is certainly room for differences of opinion between allies about methods of approach in negotiation with a diplomatic adversary. But in the recent manifestations of an exasperated impatience in British popular attitudes towards allied nations, in the affectation of a superior intuitive knowledge of Russian intentions which Americans, Frenchmen, and Germans should take on trust from British political wisdom, and in the assumption that Britain can somehow mediate between Russia and her own allies, it is possible to discern a basic outlook which is not really related to the facts of the contemporary world, but is inspired by a nostalgia for the good old days of "splendid isolation." What so many Englishmen crave from the lost heritage of their grandparents is not their imperial power, but their ability to keep clear of entangling alliances. The British nation has so far in general shown a high degree of magnanimity and good sense in the transformation of its empire by consent into a group of independent states; this has been its outstanding recent achievement and has displayed a much greater capacity for adaptation to the new political forces of Asia and Africa than has been shown by France. On the other hand, in relation to Europe and the need for some kind of collective security to ensure the survival of the Western democracies, a large section of British public opinion has tended to turn back to the past and imagine that nothing has changed since the death of Queen Victoria. In the 19th century, with an unchallenged naval supremacy and a world-wide financial and commercial preponderance, Britain neither felt the need for an ally

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nor any obligation to undertake commitments and risks on behalf of other nations; she could remain detached from Europe, using her diplomacy to mediate in the conflicts of the continental powers and retaining a capacity to intervene in the last resort, but at a time and place of her own choosing. It has been hard indeed for the British people to lose the advantages of this uniquely free and happy situation and to realise that there can be no return to them. German naval rivalry forced them out of splendid isolation before 1914, but they did their best to get back to it after the first World War; although they were signatories of the peace treaties of 1919, they were unwilling to undertake any responsibilities for maintaining them, and though they incurred obligations towards France by the Treaty of Locarno, they never took them seriously, as they showed when Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936. Until the spring of 1939 they persisted in the idea that a settlement with Germany could be reached but for the French and their alliances, just as they now think a settlement with Russia would be quite easy but for the Americans, the French, and the Germans. The difference during the last ten years is, of course, that Britain has become formally a partner with a number of other nations in a permanent alliance with all its rights and obligations. But there has never been a whole-hearted national acceptance of this new state of affairs; there remains in the British people a hard core of isolationism which rebels at the idea of being involved in a liability to defend Berlin or anything else beyond the English Channel and yearns for the old freedom to act or keep out according to mood and circumstances. The Americans, who were even more isolationist than the British between the wars, have meanwhile undergone a far more thorough conversion; indeed the decisiveness with which they have broken away from their isolationist tradition has been the most remarkable fact of history since the death of Hitler, for at the end of 1945 it was by no means clear that they were not reverting to it. Hardly less remarkable has been the progress towards political and economic integration of continental Western Europe since the war. But the prevailing attitude in Britain towards European union has been one of dislike and distrust—an attitude usually most marked in those quarters which profess to fear an American domination of Europe and should therefore logically be most concerned to strengthen through combination the European element within the Atlantic community.

There is no need for Britain to become a second Holland, if by that is meant a decline to the position of a weak and ineffective neutral destined to be "gobbled up" in the next round of world power politics. If Britain tries to stand alone, that is indeed the only fate that she can expect, for there cannot be any return to the splendid isolation of 1900. But as a reasonably co-operative partner in the Atlantic alliance, Britain has to-day both an assurance of security and wide opportunities for influence. We may take Mr. Lukacs's word for it that Americans are likely to have more respect for a "surly and recalcitrant" Britain than for a servile and sycophantic one. But being surly and recalcitrant is not enough either.

G. F. Hudson

Arguing About Television

By Raymond Williams

IT WOULD be wrong to say that in recent years we have all been thinking about television and its effects. We have certainly been reacting to television, but mainly in ways that could have been predicted before the first mast went up and the first set was installed. The television argument, in fact, has been a version of a much older argument about our culture as a whole. The patterns of reaction, from intellectual indifference to ideological prophecy, are well known from other earlier controversies.

The recent report on *Television and the Child** shows quite clearly, of course, that a majority of participants in the argument found it quite unnecessary to wait for anything so ordinary as the facts. But this is not surprising; it has indeed been characteristic of the whole argument about "popular culture." And now

* *Television and the Child.* By HILDE T. HIMMELWEIT, A. N. OPPENHEIM, PAMELA VINCE. Oxford University Press. 512 pp. 42s.

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that some facts at least are reasonably established, the course of the ordinary argument may still not be greatly affected. There is usually a first reflective pause (the polite way of describing a myth blowing up in your face), but then, the pressures being what they are, there is a steady readjustment to the old patterns. Dr. Himmelweit has been reported as complaining of slanted presentation of the results of this study, and certainly there is already some evidence of its facts being selectively used in this or that interest. The report is bulky, and quite difficult to assess; but the errors are not only of this understandable kind. I wonder how many people, who have not read the report, have gained the impression that it gives our television services "a clean bill of health." I remember the Royal Commission Report on the Press, and the similar, carefully cultivated impression that it showed, in its weighty way, how the critics of the press had been wrong. No relevant judgment, on such issues, is simple; but the prospect of accuracy is sharply narrowed by the existence of so many vested interests on all sides.

I OFFERED recently, in *Culture and Society*, a theoretical approach to the issues with which this report deals. I will recall some of my points, in relation to the report's findings.

1. Can any simple value-judgment on a technical medium of communication be adequate? Modern techniques are at worst neutral, and to ask whether television is a good or bad thing is "like asking whether injections are a good or bad thing." Still, to describe such a medium as one of "mass-communication" is in fact a concealed value-judgment, part of its meaning being communication to "the mass," which in view of the derogatory meanings of "mass" and "masses" is already, in many minds, a condemnation of the medium, as well as being a description of the particular motives of some of those who use the medium. If we think of how a television audience actually watches, *mass-communication* is especially inappropriate.

2. One of the things most frequently said about television was that it was producing a nation of "troglodytes," who were giving up reading, games, sleep, conversation, and most kinds of social activity, to remain mesmerised by this flickering screen. To me this was a new version of the life of the degraded "masses." There is, I have argued, no form of social activity which the use of these techniques has replaced. At most, by adding alternatives, they have allowed altered emphases in the time given to particular activities. Very few of the lives studied in the report were dominated by television. The activities replaced by television are primarily the cognate activities of wireless and cinema. After initial adjustments, reading is as common among viewers as non-viewers. So is sleep; so is attendance at clubs (except cinema-clubs); so are games, especially organised games. There are slight losses in visiting, and in unorganised outdoor activity. There is no evidence of television causing passivity: "viewers are as active, independent, and imaginative as controls." The overall picture is of ordinary people using television, but in no way being degraded by it, the ordinary (and in any case changing) pattern of their lives remaining paramount. I would only add that of course there never was any evidence that ordinary people lived as some people imagined the "masses" living. The "masses" formula was merely the only sophisticated way still available of despising and rejecting other people, particularly working people. One would now expect this substitute righteousness, and the rich pleasures of mock-prophecy that flow from it, to stop. But they won't.

3. From the conception of people as "masses" came the theory of mass-communication, which in part was presented as the first great experiment in popular education. We did not hear, now, of troglodytes, but of a whole people about to be educated by a "magic eye," a "window on the world." I have criticised this theory from a definition of education as a process of making human knowledge freely available and, at the same time, fostering the skills by which such knowledge is gathered, confirmed, and amended. If this is education, then clearly the mere showing to people of things (or pictures of things) which they would not otherwise have seen, is at best only part of it. The belief in television as the great popular educator springs from thinking of communication as transmission alone: the content is (sometimes) "educative," therefore the service "educates." As the report says: "Television . . . is not as black as it is painted, but neither is it the great harbinger of culture and enlightenment which its enthusiasts tend to claim for it. . . ." Specifically, among children, "viewing offers about as many advantages as disadvantages," some younger, duller children gaining by it, some older, brighter children losing. It stimulates some reading, but in general leads to interest rather than activity, and in the majority of cases is no more successful in creating interest, or conveying information, than other available channels—the other media, or the schools. I would add, on this point, that to go on talking about television as a system of "popular education" is not only against the facts, but can become a disservice to real education. Once again, television can be "used," but the arrival of the television producer and the ad-man has surely made that old-

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fashioned, underpaid figure, the teacher, even more relevant.

4. Can the content of television be equated with the way of life of those who watch it? The report is very interesting on this, and shows the equation to be false. The content of television drama is shown to be that of the lives of its producers, not its consumers. Moreover, the report makes several moral judgments on this content, which I certainly support.

> The world of television drama tends to be that of upper middle-class urban society. The occupations of people of this social level are depicted as worthwhile, while manual work is presented as uninteresting. Television plays teach that self-confidence and toughness are needed to achieve success—goodness of character is not enough; that life is difficult, especially for women; that marriages are frequently unhappy, and parent-child relationships often strained. Events rarely turn out satisfactorily and virtue seldom brings happiness in its train. Violence is an inevitable part of life, and good people often resort to it. For the adult observer, a hackneyed view of life emerges. . . .

> Values contradict each other, both between plays and within the same play . . . the goodness or badness of an act depends largely on who performs it. While the villain may not kill and get away with it, the hero may do so and may even be commended for it. Neither victim nor villain is mourned, only the hero's life is sacrosanct. This duality applies equally to stealing and lying and to patriotism; the last is valued only as long as it is directed towards the right country. . . .

This view of the world, consistently and repeatedly presented, is apparently having an effect on those who watch it. This view—in particular the subordination of ethics to success and prestige—is at least less present in the ordinary consciousness (from tradition and experience) of the people coming to watch television, than it is in the consciousness of those who provide its content. I would go further and argue that this is primarily a late-bourgeois view of life, to which the working-class tradition still provides an alternative. Again, after an analysis of the question of violence on television, the report finds the evidence sufficiently strong for action: "a reduction in the number of crime and violence programmes"; more supervision of actual presentation of these themes. (So much, incidentally, for that "clean bill of health.")

Nor does the report establish the case of those who argue that television, if often poor in content, is "giving the public what it wants."

> If three or four information programmes covering very different topics interest a large number of viewers, then we can no longer say that people in general will accept only the frivolous and mediocre; rather we have to ask ourselves: what makes these programmes acceptable where others fail?

This reasonable attitude contrasts markedly with the usual explanation—that mediocrity is the fault of the public.

This report (and its relation to the argument that preceded it) in many ways structurally resembles the Royal Commission Report on the Press (and the argument preceding that). General charges were made: "monopoly" and "direct control by advertisers" (for the Press), "passivity" and "abandonment of other activities" (for television). Investigation proved these incorrect. Yet how many other things were wrong on which criticism might have been reasonably based! However, emphasis has almost wholly been placed on acquittals; the substantial criticism is ignored or played down.

THE authors of this report deserve our respect and thanks; they have been careful, responsible, and humane. I am not competent to assess their methods, but I regret that they use, at times, the vocabulary of a prostituted sociology. An effect is an "impact," and an audience becomes a "target," etc. This is the irresponsible, fundamentally aggressive pattern of a sociology influenced by dominative theories of communication, in particular that used by advertising. It could be set down as conventional usage if the authors did not also (in their recommendations to producers) suggest consultation on, among other things, "whatever emotional responses he wishes to evoke." This is orthodox, but damnable. Calculation of effect ("impact") is, at worst, consciously manipulative. The emotional responses of an audience are that audience's business; the producer offers what he must, and responds to the response. The idea of research aiding the evoking of particular emotions would surely, on reflection, be repugnant to these authors. Yet I note that one of the authors is described on the jacket as "now doing motivational research for the British Market Research Bureau, Ltd.," the subsidiary of an advertising agency. Motivational research has been described effectively by Packard in *The Hidden Persuaders*. Are similar procedures now being employed on behalf of British television and TV advertising?

Television and the Child shows clearly that television can be a useful part of our culture, but so much depends on the purposes of those who control it. A responsible public authority would take action on the report's recommenda-

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tions. Is this happening in B.B.C. or I.T.A.? An irresponsible authority, by contrast, would notice only such parts as would allow it plausibly to continue on its present course. It was not the authors' task to enquire into the control of television, but this question is now topical and urgent; and one criterion, surely, will be the way in which this report is in fact used. The dangers and opportunities of television have been overstressed by many, yet both are real. My own conclusion is that to avoid the dangers, and to use the opportunities, we need control of a kind directly answerable to the public: open democratic control as we have in education, rather than permissive licence. Further, in view of the values now being consistently presented, we should find ways of bringing access to this vital channel of transmission into more and more hands, on a basis more fully representative of our people as a whole. For there is no alternative to full democracy in the making of a genuine common culture.

Raymond Williams

Sweet Bird of Success

A FEW days after publishing an embarrassingly explicit article in the New York *Times* where he attempted, by reference to his childhood traumas, to account for the overplus of sex and violence in his work, Tennessee Williams opened his new play, *Sweet Bird of Youth*, on Broadway. The two events were connected in more than time. The new work is, in its oblique way, the most baldly personal of a corpus of drama already unusual for its subjectivity.

Perhaps in consequence, the play is interesting primarily if you are interested in its author. As dramatic art, it is disturbingly bad—aimless, dishonest, and crudely melodramatic—in a way that Williams's writing has not been bad since his early play, *Battle of Angels*. But if the latter failed because its author did not sufficiently understand his characters, *Sweet Bird of Youth* suffers both from his ignorance of, and obsession with, himself. For Williams is gradually becoming the underground hero of his own work with the consequence that the work looks less like art than like confession and apology. Thus the author forces the critic to examine not the action of the play, which is blatantly untrue, but the neurotic problems which intrude upon it.

Like *Orpheus Descending*, to which it bears a marked resemblance, *Sweet Bird of Youth* is written to the tune of a Freudian ritual. Its hero is a blond gigolo of twenty-nine named Chance Wayne. Because of the hatred of the local political leader, Boss Finley, Chance has been an outcast from his southern home-town for some years. At the beginning of the play, he has returned to St. Cloud with his present keeper, an ageing movie queen who keeps alive on a nourishing diet of sex, hashish, benzedrine, and pure oxygen. By an ostentatious display of borrowed wealth, Chance hopes to win not only the town's approval but the hand of Heavenly, Finley's daughter (who had been his mistress and true love at the age of fifteen but who was taken from him because of his lack of status in the community). Chance soon learns that Heavenly has had her sexual organs removed after he unwittingly infected her with venereal disease some years ago. So, rather than flee the town, he remains to be castrated by the henchmen of Boss Finley. Discreetly drawing a scrim over the event, Chance turns to the audience not, as he says, for sympathy or understanding but "for the recognition of me in you, and the enemy, time, in us all!"

Despite this last-minute avowal, the real destroyer here is not Time but the segregationalist Boss Finley who, as melodramatically written (and played by Sidney Blackmer), walks around in a bathrobe uttering ominous imprecations against the hero. Once again, in other words, we are confronted by a hero, formerly "pure," now "corrupted" by repressive forces in society, who—after a sexual encounter with a willing female—ends up being physically mutilated by her avenging male relative. In *Orpheus Descending*, the hero was torn apart by dogs after the villain's wife had seduced him; in other Williams' works of recent vintage, the sexual transgressions of the heroes and heroines have been rewarded with their being eaten alive, lamed, threatened with lobotomies, and driven mad. Clearly, deviant sex, in Williams's view, brings on terrible punishments, usually emasculation (real or symbolic), and many of his plays read like Freudian melodramas in which Big Daddy punishes his sensitive child for lusting after abnormal delights. Although these delights are represented intermittently as nymphomania, male prostitution, homosexuality, and sodomy, the real theme of all these plays, including the present one, is incest—and it is a measure of the painfulness of this theme that Williams, for all his sensationalism, has never mentioned it directly.

This evasion accounts, I think, both for Williams's recurrent artistic dishonesty and for his famous predisposition to locate the seat of all knowledge and feeling around the middle

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of the human body. It also may be the reason why he so often seems both attracted and repelled by sex, an ambivalence quite clear in his confused attitude towards Chance Wayne. At times, Chance is heroic precisely because of his sexual athleticism—at one point, he divides the world into those who have "pleasure in love" and those who watch it with "sick envy"—and it is clear that Chance is castrated partly because everyone is envious of his mammoth sexual appetite. On the other hand, we are also led to believe that Chance is an example of "what is really corrupt in life," even though he was once "the finest, nicest, sweetest boy" in town, and that he got that way because Boss Finley forced him into it. Williams, depending on whether he is regarding deviant sex as rebelliously heroic or sickly evil, vacillates between a compulsion to exalt and exonerate his hero, and a feeling of nausea at his behaviour. Thus Chance Wayne ends up both as the purest and most corrupt character in the play, and there is even a suggestion, through some fancy Easter Sunday symbolism borrowed from *Orpheus Descending*, that he is to be identified with Christ.

WILLIAMS'S pseudo-Lawrencian affirmations, then, are always weakened by the fact that they are uttered through a Puritan larynx. In the same way, his pretence at documenting observable reality is exploded by his subjective fantasising. The result is a confusion of styles which is only aggravated by the production. Still breathing heavily after a trip into the stratosphere of Brechtian theatricalism with Macleish's *J.B.*, Elia Kazan has imposed a non-illusionistic burden on this play under which one can almost hear it groan. Characters are forced to direct their monologues to the audience (even when addressed to other characters), realistic business is mimed, fancy patterns are projected on the cyclorama, and Big Effects (borrowed from Federal Theatre days) tend to distort the already distended action. The acting, except for an interesting caricature from Geraldine Page, is raucous, hysterical, and clichéd; the setting, skeletonised for no apparent reason, still remains more opulent than Williams intended; and the entire production is nervy in a way we have come to expect from Kazan and sloppy in a way that we haven't. Never before has it been so obvious that Kazan really wanted to direct another play.

All in all, the structure, technique, and writing of *Sweet Bird of Youth* are evidence that Williams—momentarily, let us hope—now uses the drama for therapy and self-indulgence. In consequence, the humour, detachment, and poignancy of plays like *The Glass Menagerie* and *Summer and Smoke* have all but departed from his work. If it was once possible to say that Williams was a neurotic who also wrote compelling drama, it is now clear that his neurosis is writing the plays. And since it is indirect and devious, this probing of self lacks the insight and honesty with which he once examined the lives of others.

What is most unfortunate is that Williams is being encouraged in this vein. The play was wildly acclaimed by the seven New York journalists who currently arbitrate the success and failure of American drama; and it was quickly published in full by *Esquire* soon after another magazine had published the one-acter, *The Enemy: Time*, on which it was based. Tin-types of the author and director have recently appeared in newspapers and periodicals, TV chit-chat shows are competing to plant flattering busses on the stars, movie companies are negotiating for expensive rights, and the whole paraphernalia of Success is once again being wheeled ponderously out of the wings. Thus do we, in our insatiable hunger after private lives, bestow love, fame, fortune, and immortality on those with the willingness to expose themselves in public, just as long as that exposure reveals nothing searching or true.

Robert Brustein

Brecht's Missing Verse

SHORTLY after the workers' rising of June 1953 in East Berlin (and East Germany), Bert Brecht wrote and privately circulated the following poem:

THE SOLUTION

After the rising of the 17th June
The Secretary of the Writers' Association
Had leaflets distributed in the Stalinallee
In which you could read that the People
Had lost the Government's confidence
And could only win it back
By redoubled efforts. If so, would it not
Be simpler, if the Government
Dissolved the People
And elected another?

DIE LOESUNG

Nach dem Aufstand des 17. Juni
Liess der Sekretaer des Schriftstellerverbandes
In der Stalinallee Flugblaetter verteilen,
Auf denen zu lesen war, dass das Volk
Des Vertrauen der Regierung verscherzt habe
Und es nur durch verdoppelte Arbeit
Zurueckerobern koenne. Waere es da
Nicht einfacher, die Regierung
Loeste das Volk auf und
Waehlte ein anderes?

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Wolfgang Paul, who publishes it in the West German literary review *Neue Deutsche Hefte* (November 1958), does not explain how he came into possession of this very interesting and revealing text. He merely states that the poem in question "comes from the hitherto unpublished posthumous papers of Bertolt Brecht." There can be little doubt that it is genuine. Its style is similar to that of a number of other poems from the same period of Brecht's life which have been published, and which display the same epigrammatic kind of wit. And its tendency tallies with what we know of Brecht's attitude to the East German régime in the last years of his life. (See my "Bert Brecht's Difficulties" in ENCOUNTER, December 1958.) But it will be difficult to get conclusive proof of the poem's authenticity. Brecht's posthumous papers are kept in East Berlin, and the *Brecht-Archiv* there has refused to give access to those of Brecht's writings that show his critical attitude to certain features of East German Communism. When a West German scholar, Lore Lommel, approached the *Brecht-Archiv* last year to obtain permission to see Brecht's translation of the "Poem for Adults" by the Polish poet Adam Wazyk, she was told (according to *Die Welt*, July 17th, 1958) that this could not be granted, and that she would have to wait for the publication of the *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe* of Brecht's works.

When will this "Historical-Critical Complete Edition" see the light of day? Until it does appear, and until it is complete, the only confirmation of the authenticity of the poem "The Solution" remains the absence of an official denial of Brecht's authorship.

It would be wrong to assume that the Committee of Brecht's former collaborators which is charged with bringing out his complete works is responsible for the delay in the publication of some of his more outspoken poetry. They have shown in the past that they are eager to get as much as possible printed under the watchful eyes of the Party authorities. The memorial volume of the East German literary review *Sinn und Form* published shortly after Brecht's death (but not reprinted) is their most successful effort hitherto. It contains a number of skilfully laid time-bombs—such as the official confirmation that Brecht's often-quoted "declaration of loyalty to Ulbricht" after the June 1953 rising was, in fact, a single sentence from a long letter torn out of context. The same volume also contains a group of very revealing late poems. One of these, "Boeser Morgen" (Bad Morning), dated 1953, clearly refers to Brecht's feelings of guilt about his support for the East German régime:

The Silver poplar, that village beauty,
Is an old hag to-day. The lake
A pool of slops, don't touch it!
The fuchsias beneath the snapdragon cheap and vain.
Why?
Last night in my dream I saw fingers pointed at me
As at a leper. They were calloused
And broken.
You don't know! I cried
Guiltily.

Die Silberpappel, eine ortsbekannte Schoenheit
Heute eine alte Vettel. Der See
Eine Lache Abwaschwasser, nicht ruehren!
Die Fuchsien unter dem Loewenmaul billig und eitel.
Warum?
Heut nacht im Traum sah ich Finger, auf mich deutend
Wie auf einen Aussaetzigen. Sie waren zerarbeitet und
Sie waren zerbrochen.
Unwissend! schrie ich
Schuldbewusst.

Wolfgang Paul, who also quotes this poem, analyses it meticulously to prove that it must be dated *after* June 17th; the editors merely date it "1953." He argues that fuchsias flower in July and August, and that Brecht may have inserted the reference to them to make it clear that he is talking about his feelings after the events of June 17th. These detective efforts seem somewhat superfluous. Brecht, who had genuine sympathies with the workers, could just as easily have felt guilty about his association with a régime shamelessly exploiting the working class before their indignation exploded in strikes and riots. What matters surely is that the poem's meaning is quite unmistakeable.

In fact, two other short poems (also dated 1953, and also published in the *Sinn und Form* memorial volume) are concealed expositions of Brecht's arguments for "sticking it out." In private conversation Brecht used to condemn the terror and petty bureaucracy of the régime, but always explained that, as a Marxist, he hoped the true humanistic content of the teaching of the Marxist classics would "in the last analysis" reassert itself. The same argument appears in the poem "Eisen" (Iron):

In my dream last night
I saw a great storm.
It shook the scaffolding
And tore down a great beam
Made of iron.
Those parts that were of timber
Yielded and stood.

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Im Traum heute nacht
Sah ich einen grossen Sturm.
Ins Baugeruest griff er
Den Bauschragen riss er
Den eisernen, abwaerts.
Doch was da aus Holz war
Bog sich und blieb.

The poem clearly refers to "the building of socialism." And the connection between iron and a hard terroristic policy is even clearer in German, where "blood and iron" is a national political cliché. But if Brecht believed in the ultimate liberalisation of Communism, he also sensed that he would not live to see it:

WHILE READING HORACE

Even the great flood
Did not last for ever.
One day the black waters
Seeped away.
Yet how few
Outlasted that day!

BEIM LESEN DES HORAZ

Selbst die Sintflut
Dauerte nicht ewig.
Einmal verrannen
Die schwarzen Gewaesser.
Freilich, wie wenige
Dauerten laenger!

These late (and last) poems by Brecht are not only fascinating human and political documents of the predicament of a great poet who, having espoused the cause of Communism in the hopeful '20's, could not bring himself to cut himself loose thirty years later when he saw his ideals perverted in the realities of the '50's. They are also among Brecht's most distinctive achievements as a poet. There is much evidence to show that the published samples of his poetry from this period represent only a relatively small part of his total output in the last five years of his life. Can we be sure that these and other, more outspoken, poems will be published in the foreseeable future? An edition of Brecht's poems is promised by Suhrkamp, Brecht's West German publisher, but even this (although it is unlikely to be a complete one) has been greatly delayed. A collection of Brecht's early essays, announced several years ago, has not yet come out. All this is evidence of subterranean struggle and debate. And curious things happen even in new printings of existing East German editions of Brecht's poems. The 1958 (fifth) printing of the collection *Hundert Gedichte*, outwardly completely uniform with the first printing (1951), shows, on closer inspection, a number of startling discrepancies. The newer printing omits a whole poem which appeared on page 238 in the 1951 edition. It is the poem "Traum von einer grossen Miesmacherin" in which Brecht ridiculed the *shortage of potatoes* under the *Nazi* régime. There are chronic shortages of potatoes in Ulbricht's workers' paradise. The poem is quietly dropped. Will it reappear in the *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe*? On the other hand, the newer printing of *Hundert Gedichte* restores a number of verses to early poems by Brecht which had been omitted in the earlier printing in Brecht's lifetime. At that time Brecht was accused by Western critics of having mutilated these poems himself. It now seems more likely that the cuts were made by the authorities, and that someone close to Brecht has now restored the censored passages. How will the *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe* explain these curious variants of the text?

All this raises an important final question: is a really scholarly and complete edition of the works of a major, politically committed, but unorthodox writer possible in a totalitarian country? The promised publication of an "historical-critical collected edition" is surely a literary test-case, almost Brechtian in its drama of "The Difficulties of Writing the Truth...."

Martin Esslin

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Africa, Black and White

A Discussion of Worsthorne's "Letter from Ghana"

THERE are two kinds of racialists; those who openly support blatant racial policies such as apartheid, and those whose sub-conscious assumption of white superiority is exposed by their surprise when they find coloured people doing things of which they disapprove. Peregrine Worsthorne belongs to the latter category.

The most significant feature of Mr. Worsthorne's article is that it would have been much more relevantly written about the Union of South Africa, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, or about Kenya. If one is to judge fitness for membership of the Commonwealth according to acceptance of the spirit of democracy, the Union of South Africa would certainly never have qualified, the Rhodesias would be barred during the lifetime of the present generation, and Kenyans would have a very long furrow to plough. I wonder whether Mr. Worsthorne would consider Dr. Verwoerd, the late Messrs. Strydom, Malan, and Smuts, or Sir Roy Welensky as more fit for attendance around the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' table than Dr. Nkrumah.

The fact is that the whole of this "Letter from Ghana" reveals the author's ambivalent sense of values. Not only is he patronising when meeting African Ministers who dress differently and probably more hygienically than Europeans and constantly conscious of their skin colour; not only is he inaccurate in describing the judiciary as dominated by the whites; but whenever he finds something which he either does not understand or disagrees with he automatically makes the facile assumption that there is some connection with racial origins. Perhaps this unscientific and irrational outlook is derived not only from deep-seated colour consciousness but equally from an autocratic political philosophy. I fail to understand the unsubstantiated assertion that "in theory, majority rule is the most tyrannical form of Government conceivable," unless it be suggested that it is more tyrannical for the majority to rule the minority than for the minority to rule the majority. This belief is, of course, held by certain people, among them Dr. Verwoerd and Sir Roy Welensky. It is not held by Dr. Nkrumah nor by other than the nostalgic Victorians in Britain.

To gain a balanced perspective of developments in Ghana one has to know something of how independence was attained—a detail apparently thought unimportant by Mr. Worsthorne. It was not the British Colonial Office which put Ghana "within the delicate framework of parliamentary democracy." Nor at the time when independence was achieved could anyone have said "it all looked placid enough." It is certainly just the opposite of the truth to suggest that "separatist impulses were temporarily subordinated to the overriding aim of getting rid of the British. But once this aim had been realised, they soon broke out again with widespread violence."

Everyone who has had even a nodding acquaintance with the progress of events in Ghana over the past ten years knows that: (1) it was the Coussey All-African Commission which originally proposed the general framework of parliamentary democracy for the country; (2) that Ghanaians would be content with nothing less than full parliamentary democracy; (3) that the separatist tendencies broke out into violence nearly two years before independence was attained and never subsided; (4) that the new state was borne in a turbulent period after independence had been delayed for nearly twelve months as a result of the violent reactions of the Opposition.

Mr. Worsthorne gets at least towards the horizon of truth when he writes of the connection between opposition and sedition. There has been an unfortunate tendency on the part of the CPP Government to identify the two, but the reason stems largely from the Opposition's tactics. What is remarkable in the recent history of Ghana is that, at a time when in the Sudan, in Pakistan, and in Burma, democratic forms have been torn up, we hope only temporarily, and when autocracy is deliberately preached in Southern Africa, despite all the strains in Ghana the basic practice of parliamentary democracy has been vigorously defended. It is as untrue to suggest that habeas corpus has been destroyed here, or that the supporters of democratic government have been deported, as that there was any prospect of an Opposition paper reaching the masses if the *Daily Graphic* had kept out of the way. The weakness of the parliamentary system in Ghana is largely due to the mistaken tactics of the Opposition both before and after independence in putting more trust in violence than in democratic persuasion. Yet the opportunity for the latter still remains, though it now seems more likely that for the foreseeable future argument on policy will be more lively inside the Government party than between the CPP and the United Party. Certainly it is a complete misunderstanding of the situation in Ghana to suggest that white officials are the hard-pressed custodians of democratic practice which the Africans are trying to destroy. The white officials who have stayed in Ghana have done so to retain their jobs quite irrespective of political philosophy. The efficiency of the police force, army, and civil service is unconnected with the number of

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white people still in the country. It almost seems as though Mr. Worsthorne cannot quite reconcile his emotional reactions to the sight of white officials working for black Ministers.

Surely it can now be recognised that the new Commonwealth, which includes many more coloured than white people, is making an historic experiment in developing a voluntary international community based on one single foundation—*i.e.*, the inheritance of parliamentary democracy. The form of that democratic structure will be adapted, interpreted, and developed according to the needs of each different Commonwealth state. Parliamentary democracy exists even in South Africa and the Central African Federation, though as yet it is confined to the aristocratic minority. Nevertheless, the parliamentary spirit is a common bond between all members of the Commonwealth and provides them with that synthesis which transcends racial consciousness. Mr. Worsthorne denies it. He apparently does not recognise that the "basic antithesis" which he discerns is far more present between British and Russians than between British and Ghanaians. There is indeed a greater sense of synthesis between democratic British and Ghanaians than between democratic British and South African or Rhodesian whites. The central issue on which the future development and strength of the Commonwealth depends is whether that democratic spirit can be extended to member states which traditionally have denied it, particularly in Southern Africa. Not only Ghana and Nigeria, but India, Ceylon, Malaya, and possibly Canada are likely to test their adherence to the Commonwealth by this touchstone.

John Hatch

In Defence of Ghana

THERE are ten independent nations in Africa. Nine of them have representative government, while South Africa awaits the least satisfactory way of obtaining this—revolution. Of the nine representatively-governed nations, opposition parties and presses function fairly freely in only two: Morocco and Ghana. Given the caste and gender situation in Morocco, Ghana is probably Africa's most flourishing democracy.

This, of course, is not to say that Ghana is without undemocratic curbs on individual liberties, some of them patently unnecessary, or to deny that Worsthorne is right to imply that we in Accra endure the discomforts (as well as the comforts) of strong-arm rule. The country's leading paper, as he indicates, still awaits emancipation, and resembles papers published in colonial countries. But just as undue importance was attached to Ghana's independence, so it is manifestly unbalanced to pick on, and exaggerate, Ghana's teething pains, whilst insisting that only strong-arm régimes work in under-developed countries. And if London were thinking (as seems extremely unlikely) of drumming anyone out of the Commonwealth (not something London could do alone, in any case), there is surely a better, more embarrassing candidate for this unique honour south of the Limpopo.

Pakistan, after twelve years of independence, has never seen a general election yet. In Ghana, for all its faults and frequent maladroitness, the ballot-box is the nation's inviolable fetish—even if electorates in Africa are as unaware as electorates anywhere else of what they are voting for. India, the next most important Commonwealth nation after Britain, is reft by caste, but Ghana is nearly caste-free and classless. Women hold the strings of commerce and over fifty per cent of the vote. Compulsory education will be complete in five years' time. No régime could ever last in Ghana merely because it had an army, a strong police, and an American-style party machine.

No one, it seems, ever feels his democratic sense of what is proper has been ravished by the strong-arm bosses who are tools of metropolitan powers. The Houphouets and the Senghors, with their single-party assemblies, pass for "friends of the West." But are they more than opportunists, and is the autocratic nationalist, with his genuine following, not a surer friend for the West to have? Do we not share his irrational patriotism, his belief in resistance movements against efficient foreign occupations?

There are two standards for judging these things, but not the ones Worsthorne sees. When a race-crazy engine-driver goes off the rails in Salisbury, he gets a knighthood. Dictatorship in Khartoum, like the former one in Havana, suits our short-term "Western" interests, so we close our eyes to its virulent undemocracy. But when Nkrumah crushes violent opposition movements among the Asante and the Ewe with old-colonial thoroughness, the same papers that covered concentration camps in Kenya with bland talk of "expediency" (Worsthorne's was one) sound a view-halloo. Ethics, parliamentary democracy, loyal opposition—all the glib phrases are trotted out. Is it not false, from the outset, to talk in terms of "British democracy" in African nations, when this is only practised in Britain, and was and is not practised in British colonies? Are Kenya or Nyasaland democracies? Are the rights of the subject not more real in Ghana than in Tanganyika?

Worsthorne desperately wants to approve Ghana's motives while disapproving of what those motives motivate. It is Britain's fault, he says, for forcing on Ghana the wrong sort of democracy, but Ghana's fault for finding ways of getting round Britain's mistakes. But "any African leader would have done the same," he says of Nkrumah, adding later that he "would have been forced to build himself up into a demi-God." Does this imply that the government's stability is wedded to Nkrumah's name, and that if he died, and Komla Gbedemah took over, the CPP might lose some votes? (In fact, they would win more, because they would have the Ewe and middle-class support as well.) And Worsthorne is certainly wrong in attributing his conclusion to a belief that identification with language-groups

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(usually described as "tribes") was so strong that the Ghanaian nation would have fallen apart of its own momentum, if people, after independence, had followed their hearts. In truth, they can only follow their leaders. Language sectarianism in Ghana, like the "enmity" between Yoruba and Ibo in Nigeria, is almost exclusively invented by politicians. What Ghana faced, at independence, was not a desire among Asante to pull Ashanti out of the nation, but a demagogic campaign by Opposition leaders to sell the idea of regionalism to every region possible. Being in agreement with the Government on the essentials—independence, development, and so on—and being afflicted with the label of treason because they had opposed the governing party while this was still engaged in the fight for emancipation, they could only be a "devil's advocate" opposition, systematically taking an opposite view on everything, and canvassing support by reviving or inventing archaic "tribal" quarrels.

As Worsthorne rightly observed, the Opposition is impotent in parliament; but opposition, as he notes, functions very effectively within the government party. In what way is this "one-man dictatorship"? Obviously, a single party, imbued with a sense of democracy (as appears to be the case in Guinea) or a very tightly-knit coalition, would be better, in this period, than the uneasy parliamentary comedy to which Worsthorne refers, and which presents a discordant picture of Ghana to the outside world. Such political differences as there are in Ghana rarely extend beyond the "top," with each leader winning a following by manifestly not talking about the major issues of the day with any frankness. Even a deep and genuine popular movement like Ewe-reunification is leader-caused. Politics goes in a vacuum, divorced from the broad field of human endeavour. Leaders do not govern—they rule. Why should they do otherwise? As Worsthorne notes, Ghana has known hundreds of years of semi-communal, semi-feudal monarchy. As he omits to note, it has since known fifty-one years of gubernatorial dictatorship. (While we are about it, why not call all the spades bloody shovels?) To suggest that there is something ludicrous in a temporary Governor-General announcing measures to centralise power is to forget that other representatives of the Sovereign, known as Governors, ruled autocratically by the semi-divine right of the King himself. *This*, surely, is the tradition which influences Nkrumah most in his leanings to autocracy.

Worsthorne is equally right to believe that expatriates in the Army, from Victor Paley down, are there to prevent *coups d'état*. The police, however, is very nearly Africanised, and will be completely so in about two years. It is twice as big and far more important than the Army. The British senior civil servants are there for efficiency reasons only, because of a lack of trained replacements. They do not greatly influence policy, as Worsthorne noted, and can scarcely whitewash "strong-armism"—whitewash it in whose eyes?

Some points in Worsthorne's article fringe the absurd. To suggest that Ghana's single three-battalion regiment, with its 5,000 men (1,500 or so fighting troops) is designed to invade the Ivory Coast (*i.e.*, war with France) or Nigeria (seven times Ghana's population, three frontiers away) is ridiculous. In what way is the Army "rapidly expanding"? Where are these "new battalions"? Where is the "public meeting stadium" on which funds were wasted in Accra? (Is it the highly lucrative football stadium? Neither before or since independence have public meetings been held in that.) And where is this "second national airport"? And I am prepared to swear that no "African politician" (unless it was Elspeth Huxley) ever used the term "witch-doctor," which is unknown in Ghana.

Relations with Britain, also for the record, are conducted through the Commonwealth and External Service. Surely no one would expect a separate "Commonwealth" ministry! The Ghana-Guinea pact was Guinea's initiative, not Ghana's, and there was absolutely no "outcry" against it in Whitehall—only in two London papers, neither renowned for objective reporting on Africa. The question raised of Britain's "conflicting loyalties" appears to presume that the Central African Federation will be "white-dominated" for years to come, which is hardly probable. If such a "conflict" occurred, we could hardly afford the monstrous extravagance of backing a few hundred thousand white settlers, whose links with Britain are somewhat remote, against the wishes of nearly a hundred million English-speaking Africans.

Who are the "we" who presumed that British rule had "inculcated honesty in the public service"? Surely that is what Britain manifestly failed to do. Under indirect rule, chiefly co-operation could be bought for anything from a keg of gin to an O.B.E., or higher—the price went up in the inflationary war-time years. But corruption in high places is certainly Ghana's greatest problem, and needs radical measures—however true the excuse that a mere £3,000-a-year Minister cannot support a hundred relatives who have the obscure notion that he is some new sort of paramount chief. . . .

Who are the Africans who believe in democratic principles and who have been deported? Of the Africans so far deported, only one, so far as I know, was literate—Bankole Timothy. The others were mostly poor hatchetmen, "strangers" living in the insecurity of the Zongos, who were suborned by chiefs or politicians into thuggery. Who are the democrats who have been "squeezed out of the public service"? The top tier of the civil service is to-day full of the sort of people Worsthorne is thinking of: they vote for the Opposition, and work loyally for the Government.

Expatriates here do not want the British Press to adopt "a double standard of values; one for their own affairs and another for the affairs of Ghana." They want just the opposite—a single scale of values, which uses the same comprehension of a nation's problems as Worsthorne showed in the early part of his article; which does not compare the nationhood struggle in Ghana, or Ghana's immediate and honourable loyalty to all resistance movements in Africa, with the routine jog-along world of Britain's long-established democracy; but rather compares it—favourably, perhaps—with the standards of government shown elsewhere in Africa and Asia, two continents still recovering from

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the psychological shock of colonialism, and all the complexes it creates, and the handicap of real or relative poverty. The Commonwealth, after all, is not British: it is predominantly Afro-Asian, and surely therein lies its best chance of survival.

My first reaction, on reading "Something in the Air" remains also the last one: that the writer, obsessed by colour (despite the assertions meant to imply the contrary), conscious of the toga (rather than Western dress) as being exotic in Africa (and even as being "half-naked" attire, despite the fact that it covers more of the body than shirt and shorts), vaguely amused that the British in Ghana are not as crude and rude as in East Africa, almost puzzled that they should have "coloured" wives and mistresses (in a country where "whites" number 13,000, Lebanese included, and "blacks" 5,500,000), is unable to see anything Ghanaian in its real proportions. How else does one account for the presumably genuine impression that some Ministers speak pidgin?

Russell Warren Howe

Christiansborg
Ghana

Politics and Race

IT TAKES Mr. Worsthorne the best part of twenty-two columns to prove that Ghana has inherited the worst of all possible worlds from Britain. Then in just a few lines in his PS—"... oddly enough, my overall impression of Ghana was very far from depressing"—he undoes a great deal of what he set out to prove with so much relish and skill. The whole article is a superb example of the "double-take."

Mr. Worsthorne appears not to be troubled at all by his own contradictions. He is quite capable of writing: "Ghana ... is evolving into dictatorship by way of parliamentary government." And in the next breath: "The surface picture of Dr. Nkrumah destroying all opposition in Ghana is very misleading.... It may well be that he would like to build himself up into a dictator. But the conditions for dictatorship do not exist."

I refrain from quoting other examples. As with his contradictions, so too with his inaccuracies. He is grossly misinformed when he suggests that the judiciary, the civil service and the army, and even public opinion are dominated by whites. He is either very irresponsible or singularly ill-informed when he writes that the handful of Africans who do understand or admire the principles of democratic government have either been deported, or in other ways, squeezed out of the public service.

It would be tedious to follow Mr. Worsthorne through the thickets of contradictions and inaccuracies through which he attempts to lead one. It is not surprising that he ends up by losing his bearings in his own maze. One is forced to leave him when he talks about the possibility of Ghana sending her troops "across the Ivory Coast border in Togoland." But Mr. Worsthorne's ideas are worth looking at. He produces three: two are old—the absence of the nation-state in Africa and the problem of the best type of democracy for the new African countries—and he appears to be unaware of the vast literature which students of African affairs have produced on these questions over the past ten years; and the third—that Ghana should be ousted from the Commonwealth—is new and mischievous.

Mr. Worsthorne arrives on the African scene blinkered and gaitered by Western theories, heresies, and history. Thus, although he perceives that in the transitional stage changes will come from within the Government rather than through the polls, he fails to understand the real importance of this opposition within the Government. He can't see how—despite jobbery, nepotism, and force—the present Ghana leaders will be swept from office unless they can carry public opinion with them. Space unfortunately does not allow of a detailed discussion of the processes within Ghana's society that enables one to make such a prophecy with certainty.

He doesn't come within a mile of understanding these processes, because he doesn't understand the importance of the chewing-stick. Therefore he makes the common European error of supposing that there is a "total absence of any informed public opinion which can be appealed to on a basis of reason." But how is he to know that public opinion is lively and well-informed, even in the bush, when he confesses it impossible for him to keep conversation going, even with African intellectuals, beyond half an hour?

Nobody pleases Mr. Worsthorne. According to him, Barbara Ward is being used by Dr. Nkrumah as a decoy. Even the Queen is allowing herself to be used as a "willing puppet." If he can be so irresponsible about such people, one need not be too surprised about his no doubt unintentional offensiveness to lesser fry, white and black.

He is delighted to find how incredibly quickly one ceases to be aware that Africans are black. So unaware, in fact, that within two minutes he is carefully making this point again by reporting that all comic characteristics no longer seem worth noticing. Well, hardly. Is it this unconscious ambivalence that leads him to the startling conclusion that "far from closing the gap between Europe and Africa, the evaporation of colour prejudice may well tend to widen it"?

One last point. Like so many frustrated Imperialsists, Mr. Worsthorne is completely fainthearted when it comes to the challenge of the modern Commonwealth. His arguments in favour of getting Ghana out of the Commonwealth can be attacked on a dozen different fronts. Let one suffice.

He submits that the Commonwealth does postulate some doctrinal affinity between its members, although he wisely does not try to define what it is. But if there is a doctrinal affinity that would justify Ghana's exclusion from the Commonwealth, what of Pakistan with its military dictatorship and its bitter quarrels with India; or of South Africa with its denial of the basic ethic of Western democracy? These questions are not even touched on.

Colin Legum

The Observer
London

[*Other comment in "Letters."*]

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THEATRE

The Intellectual on the Aisle

By Angus Wilson

THE pressure of new media in the presentation of the arts and the constantly-shifting, as yet indistinct, pattern of the new audiences produced by social and educational revolutions have begun to effect a corresponding change in the world of criticism. Narrow categories—still so faithfully preserved in English University education—have started to break down before the evident potential danger of extinction that faces the cinema, the theatre, or the novel. Dons, for long now *éminences grises* behind the scenes of literary creation, have now brought their academic standards of criticism not only before the readers of highbrow monthlies, but before the general reader busy with his or her library list in the pages of the weeklies and Sundays. And not only Eng. Lit. dons, but philosophy dons. On the radio and on television persons eminent in all sorts of alien professions give the public their views on the cinema, painting, and sculpture. Only the most popular art, music, by reason of its esoteric vocabulary, remains paradoxically immune from the outside critic (though who knows where the familiar voice of Mr. Kingsley Amis on jazz may lead?). Some of all this, of course, is only part of the pseudo-democratic journalism that delights to tell us that Mrs. Green, stopped while shopping in Kingston, proved to be uncertain whether Suez was or was not a mistake. A good deal of it, however, is a more serious cry of "all intellectuals on deck" in the alarm of threatening cultural wreck. In times of danger the English (even English intellectuals) show distrust of the professional: that familiar figure of the English Establishment—the first-class University mind—is the Father figure we turn to.

Of all artistic worlds the theatre, of course, by reason as much as anything, I think, of the simple fact of its working-hours, turning every man's night into day, has remained the most guardedly closed professional world of all. Actors and managements may fear or dislike many of the professional critics, yet they unite in speaking the language of the theatre, a tongue at once strangely colourful and misty. Yet even here pressure has produced certain alien incursions. In England, at any rate, the extraordinary technical brilliance of acting, production, and décor have finally only succeeded in throwing into highlight the dusty mediocrity of most of the plays so glitteringly presented. There have been doubting voices even in the theatre world itself about this strange contrast: Rahabs ready to let in outside spies. It is not only a question of novelists being urged to write for the stage. They have always done so in France; those who have tried to do so in England or America since the war have not shown the technical ambidextrousness of Galsworthy or Mr. Priestley. It is more that increasing numbers of non-theatre people have begun to discuss the theatre in their own terms as they would other arts. Into such an atmosphere Miss Mary McCarthy's book (*Sights and Spectacles*, Heinemann) comes most timely.

FEW people can have written theatre reviews with such absolute disregard of the theatrical standpoint as she does in this collection of notices that appeared between 1937 and 1958 in *Partisan Review*. She starts from the knowledge, common property for long of the greater part of highly-educated people, yet still blissfully almost unknown to the world of the theatre, that intellectuals in general do not go to the theatre, which they regard on the whole as a last ditch of the corny, but rather to the cinema. This is not, because of the stirrings I have already mentioned, quite so true in England as it was ten years ago; but it is still generally true. To this basic premise of Miss McCarthy's, I should add that not only intellectuals have this attitude to the theatre but also a high percentage of all intelligent adult males—professional men, scientists, technicians, and so on. When we add that in England as Mr. Raymond Williams has lately insisted, the working classes have no habit of theatre-going, we have a picture of an art curiously isolated from the main stream of modern society. It is this uncompromising approach of Miss McCarthy's—of a modern citizen visiting some strange kind of museum—that, in my opinion, gives such strength to her views. It is true, as she underlines in her preface, that her position as a reviewer for *Partisan*, particularly in its early, good old "brave" Trotskyite

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days, clothes what she says in a defiant, self-consciously anti-bourgeois, anti-success dogmatism which is comic when she is particularly wrongheaded and a bit priggish when she is particularly perceptive. But theatre people, and especially professional theatre critics who use this surface schoolmarm intellectualism to dismiss what she has to say as insensitive, or "clever," or without any sense of theatre (and they will, alas, be aided in dismissing her views by a humbly self-critical preface as typical of her as is her arrogant logic) will be making a foolish mistake. When she takes it for granted that intelligent people prefer the cinema to the theatre, she is right, and only the theatre has not yet known it. When she takes it for granted that the most highly-praised actors and actresses are the worst in the business, she is also only voicing in her own more definite manner the qualified fear that most intelligent and insensitive people share—the fear that too often stars make for the presentation of mediocre vehicle plays, or ruin by their over-assertion of personality such good ones as they deign to appear in. When she takes it for granted that Maxwell Anderson and Clifford Odets and Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams and Saroyan and Van Druten, and even much of O'Neill, just isn't any good, she is voicing the opinion of far more than a little group of intellectuals, far more than the cosy closed shop of the theatre ever realises. But then she is doing the rare thing of visiting the theatre and reporting back to the real world outside, rather than discussing within the family circle. The term of reference of her judgments of plays is always modern society; for most professional critics the choice is between one theatrical convention and another. The search for social significance, of course, often leads her into absurdities; she pursues it in ephemeral Broadway successes like a panther after a mouse—and the panther looks silly, not the mouse. It conditions her few admirations; increases her admiration for Shaw's uncompromising intellectualism; makes her strangely blind to Mr. Osborne's faults. It means, in the last resort, that she is far from adequate as a dramatic critic, but it also means that everything she says is relevant for a modern reader. If the theatre would become an extremely intelligent debating-house were she dictator, it would also be much less likely to degenerate into an arty adolescent charade or a well-trimmed, middlebrow vacuity if there were always a voice like hers to be heard shouting loudly from the wings.

Miss McCarthy's strengths and weaknesses are immediately apparent when one reads *Sights and Spectacles* along with the collected theatre reviews of Mr. Harold Clurman, *Lies Like Truth* (Macmillan, New York). Mr. Clurman is the best kind of professional critic, and he is additionally radical in his social views (though a whole analysis of the views I am expressing might be made by comparing his "radicalism" with Miss McCarthy's), he is favourable to the serious, and cosmopolitan, so that to set him against Miss McCarthy is no absurdly unequal match. Yet the kind of innate timidity that besets people steeped in the theatre —and Mr. Clurman is always this—is shown by his "boldness" in asserting that *Godot* is more significant than *Anne Frank*. Miss McCarthy's remarks about both plays would, I am sure, be very different. Yet in the course of his reviews, so filled with theatre talk, he does nevertheless succeed in evoking the essense of many performances, of many moments of success and failure upon the stage, for the reader. Miss McCarthy, interesting though she always is, never really evokes anything that she has seen; she analyses it, asserts its implications and its limitations, but never brings it to life. This surely is where her appreciation of the theatre stops short. She cannot or seldom can accept drama, because too often drama leaves sheer intelligence for emotional realms that are not beneath or above her but simply outside her range. It is surprising when one thinks of the imaginative compassion she shows for her grandmother in her masterly autobiography, but in the theatre, it seems it is so—she can't quite let herself go.

In one sense, for example, she is so absolutely right in her harsh judgments of Mr. Williams' plays; yet if one sets her disgusted remarks about Blanche in *Streetcar* against Mr. Clurman's imaginatively sympathetic understanding, one can only feel a certain distasteful snobbery—intellectual, social, and sexual in Miss McCarthy's dismissal of Blanche. This contrast between these two American estimates of Blanche is extremely illuminating. After allowing that the character is pitiful, Miss McCarthy writes:

> She must be a symbol of art and beauty, this poor flimsy creature to whom truth is mortal, who hates the feel of experience with a pathologic aversion—she must not only be a symbol but she must be given a poetic amount of self-definition; she who has never spoken an honest word in her life is allowed, indeed encouraged, to present her life to the audience as a vocational decision, an artist's election of the beautiful, an act of supreme courage, the choice of the thorny way.

Of course, in one sense, Miss McCarthy is right —there is a confusion, a blurring at a certain point in the play of the distinction between Blanche's own picture of herself and Mr. Williams' view of her. But dramatically, from the development of the shape of the conflict Mr.

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Williams has created, Blanche set against the stunted compassion and above all the actions of the Kowalskis does suddenly command the very values which previously she has only pretended to in day-dreams. Miss McCarthy's loyalty to intellectual and moral toughness is characteristic and of the essence of what makes her so likeable a literary personality; yet its very stiffness, its intransigence narrows her vision—she sees only beauty and truth (those concepts to be guarded always at the expense of the toughest courage) associated with Blanche (so contemptibly untough a woman), thus outraged in her tough idealism, she is in no state to take in the play as a whole, to feel the force of Kowalski's destruction of Blanche. How different is Mr. Clurman's estimate!

> One of the greatest parts ever written for a woman in the American theatre, it demands the fullness and variety of an orchestra.... The part represents the essence of womanly feeling and wounded human sensibility. Blanche lies and pretends, but through it all the actress must make us perceive her truth. She is an aristocrat (regardless of the threadbare myth of Southern gentility); she is an aristocrat in the subtlety and depth of her feeling. She is a poet, even if we are dubious about her understanding of the writers she names; she is superior by the sheer intensity and realisation of her experience, even if much of what she does is abject.

We can see at once the theatrical provincialism of this in the superlative—"one of the greatest parts ever written for a woman in the American theatre." We can imagine how flabbily sentimental Miss McCarthy would feel the "regardless of," "in spite of," and "even if" to be, yet, I think, when we come to the words "sheer intensity and realisation of her experience," we can see at once what Mr. Clurman, for all his professional limitation, has experienced in his dramatic appreciation of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and what Miss McCarthy in her admirable "high thinking" has missed.

DRAMA, in fact, does demand sympathy and not only sympathy but a kind of emotional loyalty to defeated people; and often they are people who have no strength of mind or even high courage of spirit to offer against their defeat, often, too, people of inadequate intellectual or moral integrity. I am sure that Miss McCarthy is right in saying that with Mr. Williams and Mr. Miller this has been carried to its unacceptable, sloppy conclusion. But the tragedy of the weak, the foolish, and the poor in spirit cannot be entirely dismissed as Miss McCarthy's inclination would lead her. Nor, I think, can we accept all other faults in plays if toughness of mind and spirit are present as she can do when faced with Jimmy Porter. The fault, as she feels it to be, is not a new one in drama. Her clever, plausible account of Hamlet —ultimately so beside the real point—suggests that she senses this defect here. She can accept it in Chekhov by adopting the comic view of his plays. Yet it leads her into a strangely distorted view of Ibsen. Hedda Gabler, though tougher and more intelligent, is a prototype of Blanche. Nora, indeed all but a few of Ibsen's protagonists, are little better judged by Miss McCarthy's standards—only perhaps Dr. Stockmann has the "fighting" qualities she asks for. And on this she bases a theory of the insufficiencies of realist drama. Yet the idea is really only plausible. Ibsen may be "better" at the small horrors, that is they may be more *intellectually* telling than the suicides, but one has only to resee in one's imagination an Ibsen play to remember that in fact the proportions were *dramatically* effective exactly as Ibsen intended them. And so, too, her determined moral awareness makes Miss McCarthy dismiss *The Importance of Being Earnest* as a play of calculating, hard, worldly puppets, but the brilliance in effect must have some source—is it not that she has missed in her moral zeal the love which Wilde feels for all his characters? In all this, I think, Mr. Clurman moving within his theatrically-bound conventions, is nearer the mark.

Yet, with all these myopias, Miss McCarthy is surely on to the right thing. Mr. Clurman deplores the effect of the rat race upon contemporary dramatists, yet he is unwilling wholly to forgo the success hierarchy which perpetuates it.

Indeed, it is when I consider Miss McCarthy's critics that I care less about her insufficiencies. The theatre is not so intellectual a machine as she supposes; moments of dramatic intensity are often more important than intelligence or moral toughness. Yet, Mr. Lambert, reviewing *Sights and Spectacles* in *The Sunday Times*, can dismiss it because she fails to see that in a play, as in a work of music, it is the particular moment of dramatic force that constitutes pleasure, not the whole work. This seems to me as much nonsense about the theatre as it is about music. Yet many of the best professional critics maintain it. And those who care for the play as a whole too often mean neat tailoring of a pointless vacuity. Against all this Miss McCarthy does great service in levelling her Calvinistic judgments; and the proof of their worth is surely demonstrated when one is impatient to know whether she counts as goats or sheep so many other writers she does not include in this collection. Anouilh? A goat, surely. And Eliot as a dramatist? But what about Beckett or Ionesco or Montherlant? I long to know.

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Thinking What We Are Doing

By W. H. Auden

THE NORMAL consequence of having read a book with admiration and enjoyment is a desire that others should share one's feelings. There are, however, if I can judge from myself, occasional exceptions to this rule. Every now and then, I come across a book which gives me the impression of having been especially written for me. In the case of a work of art, the author seems to have created a world for which I have been waiting all my life; in the case of a "think" book, it seems to answer precisely those questions which I have been putting to myself. My attitude towards such a book, therefore, is one of jealous possessiveness. I don't want anybody else to read it; I want to keep it all to myself. Miss Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition** belongs to this small and select class; the only other member which, like hers, is concerned with historical-political matters, is Rosenstock-Hussey's *Out of Revolution*.

Possessiveness is, of course, an immoral emotion and, if the following remarks misrepresent or fail to do justice to Miss Arendt, at least they have been a moral discipline for me.

Nobody, I fancy, feels "happy" about the age in which we live or the future which even the living may know before they die. At all times in history men have felt anxious about their own fate or the fate of their class or community, but there has seldom been a time, I believe, when the present and future of the whole human endeavour on this earth have seemed questionable to so many people.

Miss Arendt is not, of course, so foolish or presumptuous as to offer saving solutions. She merely asks us to think what we are doing which we can never manage unless we can first agree about the meaning of the words we think with, which, in its turn, requires that we become aware of what these words have meant in the past.

It would not be inaccurate, I believe, to call *The Human Condition* an essay in Etymology, a re-examination of what we think we mean, what we actually mean and what we ought to mean when we use such words as nature, world, labour, work, action, private, public, social, political, etc.

Consequently, the best way to approach it might be by discussing some of its definitions as if it were a dictionary.

NATURE: Man is part of nature in that he is a biological organism subject like all other creatures, to the laws of nature and the temporal cycle of generation. From the point of view of nature, man has no history, only the proto-history of the evolutionary processes by which the human species came into being. For nature, every man is an anonymous member of his species, identical with every other, or, at most, divisible into male and female. For nature, therefore, so long as the human species exists, there is no such thing as death, only life, and terms like growth and decay have no meaning, for these are only relevant to individuals of whom nature knows nothing. This natural biological man is, like some but not all animals, *social*—the survival of this species requires that its members associate constantly with each other—and he is a *labourer*. Miss Arendt defines as *labour*, any behaviour which is imposed by the need to survive. Thus, a tiger hunting its prey, can be said to be labouring. Man, however, is the labouring animal par excellence—the bee runs him pretty close—firstly because his particular needs and his numbers require that he spend a much greater part of his time in acquiring or producing what he needs to survive, and secondly, because he seems to be endowed with both the capacity and the instinct to produce a

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surplus over and above his immediate needs of consumption.

Man, the labouring animal does not act; he exhibits human behaviour, the goal of which is not a matter of personal decision, but dictated by the natural instinct to survive and propagate life. His motive, if the word can properly be used at all, is pleasure, or rather the avoidance of pain. Though he is social, the experiences of the labouring animal are essentially *private* and subjective. What he experiences are the unshareable experiences of the body. He needs the presence of his fellows not as persons but as bodies, another set of muscles, a fertile member of the opposite sex.

To man the labouring animal, past and future have no meaning. All that is temporally real to him is the present point on the biological cycle. For this reason he has no need of *speech*. If he uses words, he uses them as bees use dance-movements, as a code for conveying necessary information.

Lastly, man the labouring animal does not and cannot ask what his behaviour means, for life as life is something given, not made. It is like asking whether we live to eat or eat to live.

WORLD: In addition to being a member of the human species, every man is, what no other animal is, a mortal individual, aware that, though the race may be immortal, he and every other human individual must die.

At the same time he is aware—or was aware until modern science has made him doubt the evidence of his senses—that the realm of nature is made up not only of mortal creatures, but also of things, the earth, the ocean, the sun, moon, and stars, which are always there.

Out of this double awareness, of human mortality and the everlastingness of things, arises the desire and hope of transcending the cycle of natural birth and death by *making* a *world* of things which endure and in which, therefore, man can always be at home.

As Miss Arendt says:

> Birth and death presuppose a world which is not in constant movement, but where durability and relative permanence make appearance and disappearance possible, which existed before any one individual appeared in it and will survive his eventual departure. Without a world into which men are born and from which they die, there would be nothing but eternal recurrence, the deathless everlastingless of the human as of any other animal species.

The mortal individual who is man the maker is not social, that is, for the process of fabrication he requires the presence, not of human beings, but of the various materials out of which he fashions a world. The object he makes, on the other hand require the existence of a public community of human beings to use them and enjoy them. The fabricated world has an objective reality which is lacking in both human behaviour and human action.

> Against the subjectivity of men stands the objectivity of the man-made world rather than the sublime indifference of an untouched nature. Only we who have erected the objectivity of a world of our own from what nature gives us, who have built it into the environment of nature so that we are protected from her, can look upon nature as something "objective." Without a world between man and nature, there is eternal movement but no objectivity.

What distinguishes working from labouring is that the results of labour are immediately consumed by the labourer while the products of work, whether use-objects like tools or enjoyment-objects like works of art, once they are completed, persist as they are unchanged and, ideally, for ever. A tool may wear out or be replaced by a better one, but this is an accident, while the notion of a loaf of bread that lasts forever is absurd; if it is not consumed, it is worthless.

The attitude of the worker or maker towards time, therefore, is quite different from that of the labourer. The past and future have a meaning for him but in a special way. What he assumes is that the future will be like the past; time for the maker, that is, has neither the cyclical motion of nature, nor the unilinear irreversible flow of history—like space it does not move but is there. All he knows about time is that it takes time to make an object so that he can only define it to himself as that which must not be wasted.

While the labourer always remains the servant of nature upon whose fertility his survival ultimately depends, the worker regards nature as raw material which has no value until he confers value upon it by transforming it into a world of objects.

To the degree that these objects have enjoyment value as well as use value, they may be said to be forms of speech. A beautiful temple "addresses" us no less than a beautiful poem. But it is the thing that speaks not its maker. While the labourer cannot even ask the question "what does life mean," the worker can say "life itself is meaningless but it provides the opportunity for making a meaningful world. He does not desire glory for himself but immortality for the things made with his hands.

ACTION: In addition to being a member of the human species, subject to natural necessity, and a mortal individual who can transform mortal life into immortal objects, every man is a unique

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person. Though all must die, the birth of every human being marks the beginning of the existence of a being the like of whom never existed before and will never exist again. To be a person is to be able to say "I" and to have a biography of one's own, and the sum of all human biographies constitutes what we call history. While the labourer may require the society of other members of his kind and the worker the existence of others to use or enjoy his works, only the person requires a *public* realm of other persons to whom through his *actions* he discloses who he is. For human action is unintelligible without speech whereby the agent identifies who he is, what he is doing, and intends to do.

Labour is recurrent, work comes to an end when it has completed its task (which can be undone), but action is unpredictable, unrepeatable, and irretrievable. The name of the actor, even the act itself, may be forgotten, but it will effect the actions of others till the end of time. Action tends to be as boundless as the freedom in which it is grounded and would destroy us if we did not voluntarily set limits to what we do.

The three principle limitations are law, forgiveness, and promises. By laws we establish a common agreement to prohibit certain actions and to punish offenders rather than take unlimited vengeance. By forgiveness we dismiss an error for the sake of the person who committed it. In an admirable sentence, Miss Arendt indicates the relation between law and forgiveness.

> Men are unable to forgive what they cannot punish, and they are unable to punish what has turned out to be unforgiveable.

By promises we set a bound to our actions in the unknown future. Promises are always specific, valid for an agreed purpose; a general promise like saying "I promise to be good" is meaningless.

IN HER historical review of these notions, Miss Arendt starts with the Greeks.

It is hard to say which is the most astonishing, the Greek pride which identified the human with the human person who acts out of freedom not necessity and relegated all that men do with their bodies or their hands, all that is necessary or useful to a sub-human status, or the Greek clearsightedness which saw exactly what, in their age, such a premise must involve. The truly human person can only exist if there are semi- or sub-human beings who will supply his necessities and build his world for him. But no human beings exist who will do this of their own free-will; they must be compelled. The necessary pre-political condition for the free community of persons is violence and slavery. It is to their credit that the Greeks never pretended, as some later upholders of slavery have done, that certain kinds of human beings are happier as slaves than they would be as free men; on the contrary, they argued that a slave must be a base fellow because he did not kill himself rather than be enslaved.

Life in the Greek City state was divided, therefore, into two realms, the private realm of the household, which its master ruled by force, and in which not only the business of rearing a family but also all the activities we call economic were carried on, and the public realm of politics in which the free citizen disclosed himself to his peers by speech and action and strove to win glory.

Miss Arendt is more reticent than, perhaps, she should be, about what actually went on in this public realm of the Greeks. My knowledge of Greek History is very limited, but the picture given by Thucydides is not, to my mind, very alluring. Miss Arendt may be right when she deplores Plato's attempt to eliminate the freedom of the public realm and turn politics into a form of craftsmanship, but the way in which the Greeks had used their freedom makes it understandable. They realised that the great political virtue was moderation and the great political vice *hubris*, but how their ideal man who, thanks to the labour of others, was freed from all natural necessity could escape the temptation to *hubris*, it is hard to imagine, for he was not a god but a mortal man leading something very like the life of a god. As Miss Arendt says:

> The price of absolute freedom from necessity is, in a sense, life itself, or rather the substitution of vicarious life for real life . . . for mortals the easy life of the gods would be a lifeless life.

To make a vicarious life real, to prevent it being meaningless and boring, the free Greek citizen had to seek to make it as extraordinary and daring as possible, and politics conducted thus are apt to end in disaster.

Miss Arendt's definition of political power, as distinct from violence or strength, is admirable, but I do not think the Greeks possessed it.

> Power is actualised only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, when words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy, but to establish relations and create new realities.

If the Greeks made the mistake of attempting to split up the threefold nature of man, to assign his labouring body to one class of men, his

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working hands to another, and his active personality to a third, they were perfectly correct to value action so highly. While someone who neither labours nor works ceases to be human, it is in personal action, not in labouring to live or working to make a world, that a man becomes himself and gives meaning to his existence. A society dominated by the modes of thought proper to work, as was the mercantile society at the beginning of the 19th century, loses its *raison d'être*.

> While only fabrication with its instrumentality is capable of building a world, this same world becomes as worthless as the employed materials, a mere means to further ends, if the standards which governed its coming into being are permitted to rule after its establishment.

Our own modern technological society, whether it call itself capitalist or communist, is dominated by the modes of thought proper to labour; its members consider whatever they do primarily as a way to sustain their own lives and those of their families—the artist is virtually the only worker left—and their value to society is conceived in terms, not of what each produces but of his function in the collective productive process.

So long as these standards prevail, the more successful our society becomes in achieving its goal—a mastery over natural necessity which will abolish the necessity for labour—the more meaningless it will get. Technology has already advanced to the point where it is possible to conceive of a society in which production has become automatic and the only necessity left to men is consumption. The land of Cockagne, so charming as a wish-dream, would be less charming in reality.

> The danger is that such a society, dazzled by the abundance of its growing fertility and caught in the smooth functioning of a never-ending process would no longer be able to recognise its own futility—the futility of a life which does not fix or realise itself in any permanent object which endures after its labour is past.... What we are confronted with is the prospect of a society of labourers without labour, that is, without the only activity left to them. Surely, nothing could be worse.... The spare time of the *animal laborans* is never spent in anything but consumption, and the more time left to him, the greedier and more craving his appetites.

THE significance of the words *private* and *public* in the life of the modern nation state are almost the reverse of their significance in the Greek *polis*.

Politically, even in a democracy, we are divided, like the Greek household, into rulers and the ruled. The rulers, it is true, are not persons, but officials, and the obedience of the ruled is secured less by naked violence than by the anonymous pressure of social conformity, but "the rule by nobody is not necessarily no rule: it may indeed, under certain circumstances, turn out to be one of the cruellest and most tyrannical versions."

Public Life, in the Greek sense, has been replaced by social life, that is to say, the private activity of earning one's bread is now carried on in public.

What a modern man thinks of as the realm where he is free to be himself and to disclose himself to others, is what he calls his private or personal life, that is to say, the nearest modern equivalent to the public realm of the Greeks is the intimate realm, and we have a noun, unknown to the Greeks, *the Public*, that curious body made up, as Kierkegaard said, of people at moments when they are not themselves.

The modern equivalent to the Greek man of action is the scientist who can say, like Werner Von Braun—"Basic research is when I am doing what I don't know what I'm doing," and the historical consequence of their deeds has been the alienation of man, not from himself, but from his world.

> What is new is not that things exist of which we cannot form an image... but that the material things we see and represent and against which we had measured immaterial things for which we can form no images should likewise be "unimaginable for however we think it is wrong; not perhaps quite as meaningless as a triangular circle, but much more so than a winged lion."
>
> What men now have in common is not the world but the structure of their minds, and this they cannot have in common, strictly speaking; their faculty of reasoning can only happen to be the same in everybody.

At first sight it might seem logical to hand over the government of society to the scientists, but the only kind of action they understand is action into nature; with the human being they can only deal in so far as he is natural and impersonal.

> The reason why it may be wise to distrust the political judgment of scientists qua scientists is that they move in a world where speech has lost its power.

I hope that these remarks and quotations give a faint idea of the richness and fascination of *The Human Condition*. Let me end with one final epigram by Miss Arendt which we may, if we are unlucky, have cause to remember.

> It is far easier to act under conditions of tyranny than it is to think.

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D'Annunzio's Mythomania

The Poet as Superman, Gabriele D'Annunzio, a Biography. By ANTHONY RHODES. *Weidenfeld and Nicolson.* 25s.

IT HAS sometimes occurred to me that Italy is in a kind of deep freeze for most Englishmen to-day. There is little about Italy in the English press: at most occasional news of a popular new Pope, of a luscious scandal, or a riot involving police and workers. When a European conference is being arranged, the "four Western Powers" are taken to mean ourselves, France, Germany, and the United States. Some fifty million Italians down on the Mediterranean remain unaccounted for. Somewhere on another level altogether there is an awareness that Italians have strikingly good taste in design. Our biggest car firm gets its bodies re-designed in Italy; promptly the biggest popular German car firm rushes south to do likewise. Men's and women's fashions from Italy penetrate our London and provincial shops. Vermouth is in every glass before meals. It only remains for Italian fashion designers to burst into the empty field of fashions for the older woman (who is inevitably becoming a major consumer of fashions) to win a resounding æsthetic and economic victory. On yet another level tens of thousands of Irish, Welsh, Scottish, and English tourists go to Italy every year; many (one surmises, perhaps wrongly) in order to keep up with the Joneses who went last year, but many, quite young, return from lone trips enchanted, and eager to return. On this quite human level there are plenty of Anglo-Italian ties, some indeed dating from the war and the Eighth Army.

The traffic in reverse, of Italians visiting England, becomes heavier every year. There are summer days in Piccadilly, when the sound of Italian spoken by groups of jovial young Italian visitors rings in one's ears, and car numbers from all over the peninsula pepper the stream of traffic. All these, however, are the private rather than the public Anglo-Italian bridges. There is nothing in the mid-1950's which remotely corresponds to the public, official, and widespread English enthusiasm for "Italian unity" in the middle of the last century, carrying in its train the amateur art historians, the host of minor Ruskins, John Addington Symonds, and Mrs. Jamiesons. What these students of Italy wrote of Italy's past has rarely been equalled in this century: great picture-books have taken the place of great prose.

In this tenuous, almost private, and unofficial world of Anglo-Italian relations comes Mr. Anthony Rhodes' study of an Italian poet and his times, a period roughly between 1880 and 1940. Deliberately I write "an Italian poet," because in the long run, if Gabriele D'Annunzio survives, he will surely survive as a poet, and not at all as a "superman," any more than Dante has survived as a preacher of imperialistic myths (*pace* the late G. A. Borgese), but because again and again Dante names love as the geometry and the measure of those who would understand anything at all profoundly, and calls (through Ulysses) upon men to remember their heritage and follow virtue and knowledge, rather than live like brutes. Here is my first quarrel with Mr. Rhodes' preface, well written, distilled (with acknowledgements) from a very long book by Signor Borgese called *Goliath*. One of Signor Borgese's themes is that Dante and Machiavelli must be held responsible for sponsoring the dream of a revived Roman Empire among succeeding generations of Italians.

Now if Mr. Rhodes had seriously made the Borgese theme his own, then *The Poet as Superman* would not have been a biography of D'Annunzio's amorous and political adventures, but an examination of his texts and speeches and actions referred back to relevant passages in Dante and Machiavelli. But the preface hangs in mid-air; afterwards the argument is dropped. Mr. Rhodes then exploits another Italian writer's thesis, that of Signor Aniante who wrote a book called *D'Annunzio, the John the Baptist of Fascism*, and works some pages into this pattern (notably in the essay which appeared in the December number of this journal). I think Mr. Rhodes has set too much store by Signor Aniante's thesis, and here I venture to speak from experience. Mussolini's upbringing inside a working-class mass movement which he will conquer, pervert, and use to his own ends and as his chief instrument, is never properly grasped by Mr. Rhodes. Not emulation and mere difference of degree, but a radically different approach to the seizure of power separates D'Annunzio from Mussolini.

There is no lack of Italian books about D'Annunzio, and the most chatty and curious of all (especially politically curious) is the book written by D'Annunzio's private secretary, Tom Antongini. I think the trouble about embracing any of these Italian theses about D'Annunzio is that they involve embracing a whole lot of Italian prejudices with them. This happens in *The Poet as Superman*, so that the reader is left puzzled, carrying away a faint taste of irony about Italy such as really inspired all those Englishmen (and let us remember that they were in the majority) who thought that Mussolini was "a good thing," and that such an undisciplined, volatile people as the Italian people "ought to have a strong dictator...."

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The irony drops away as Mr. Rhodes describes D'Annunzio's war exploits in the first World War, nearing his fifties, in flimsy airplanes and in fast motor boats across the Adriatic into Austrian ports, and the Fiume adventure with all its staginess and mock heroics, is described with zest. I still doubt, after reading Mr. Rhodes' book, that D'Annunzio ever nursed the myth of marching on Rome from Fiume, but I would have liked such new evidence as there is (all quoted) to have been more carefully sifted and weighed.

Mr. Rhodes is often concerned with the decadence of Italian society. Of course it looks decadent from the D'Annunzian hillock. He leaves out the Florentine and Venetian Republics, the Communes, and the patronage of the Church which gave the cities architecturally splendid civic centres and craftsmanship in the arts which still lives on. In another sense he leaves out the Papacy, the Pontifex Maximus created by Constantine in Rome and then in Constantinople as the direct Heir of the Roman Empire, and enlisting now foreign, now Italian arms, to defend and uphold a precarious temporal power. That is how the long foreign occupations arose, when they did not arise from sheer cupidity for this fine land. To argue that the decadence of Italian society is due to foreign occupations is too bald a statement. The temporal power of the Papacy was surely the Italian civic problem down the ages, and that is what Garibaldi and Cavour had to wrestle with, what Mussolini came to terms with, what De Gasperi held at bay, and what to-day is once again the uneasy concern of most Italians, in its new forms of interference in all branches of Italian life. It was no accident that one of the ablest and most travelled bishops of the Church, Monsignor (later Cardinal) Costantini, kept a very cool head in Fiume while D'Annunzio lost his, and finally arranged a less bloody surrender than would otherwise have occurred.

Readers of Mr. Rhodes' book will carry away the idea that in the sixty years he covers, "D'Annunzianism" was rampant and provided the only alternative to a dreary, corrupt parliamentary régime. This is very misleading. Ten thousand Italians were hauled before Mussolini's Special Tribunal during his dictatorship. Catholic Action for its part kept the Popular (later the Christian Democrat) Party in some kind of skeleton shape for victory at the polls after millions of Fascists had become Communist voters. Mr. Rhodes scorns Italian political parties because they splintered. So did parties in England: Gladstone began his career as a high Tory and ended up a left Radical; Ramsay Macdonald began his career as a Labour man and ended up leading a splinter National Labour Party. Mr. Rhodes acclaims the Italian Communist Party as the only party which could qualify as a party "in our sense of the word." This is nonsense. The Italian Communist Party isn't a party at all "in our sense of the word." It is another church within the Italian State, from which you resign or are purged after confessing your heretical deviations.

As for D'Annunzio himself, his ghost is not laid in this book. I have often speculated, in my thirteen years' residence there, about the ascendancy of rhetoric like that of D'Annunzio's. Why is every Italian public speaker a potential preacher? The competition of the Church is enormous. Every parish has its sermons. That is where it all comes from, the mode, the manner, the rhetoric. But the enormity of D'Annunzio's ambitions and experiments—his myth-making capacities—belong surely to the fringes of 19th-century intellectual life all over Europe. Shelley himself toyed with the myths of atheism, free love on the big scale, socialistic anarchism. Had he lived would he not have been marching with the Chartists in 1830? Houston Stewart Chamberlain's vulgar racial myths made great headway in Germany before D'Annunzio or Hitler. Charles Maurras

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and Maurice Barrès screamed nationalism in and around *Action Française* during the period in France and begat the Cagoulards in more or less lineal descent from the Camelots du Roi. Turgenev's Dimitri Rudin wanders all over Europe to end on the barricades during the Commune. Huysmans' des Esseintes tries every known and unknown vice in an attempt to quell the malady of the pleasure-seeking intellectual *ennui*....

All these experimenters were relatively harmless (and often extremely stimulating) as long as their political and moral (or immoral) capers were performed for the benefit of the hard-working scholars, reformers, and professors busy setting up and obeying to the best of their ability their ideals of moderation, widespread welfare, education, and democracy. The mythomanes on the fringe merely warned them of the perils which sobriety must expect to encounter. But when the restricted circle of these debates was suddenly enlarged and the mythomanes seized the new means of communication and appealed directly to the masses, hell was let loose. Legionaries, *cagoulards*, black and brownshirts, uneducated millions who could just read or at least listen in the squares, were regaled with myths, flatteries, badges, enemies to pursue and kill, places and pleasures to seize and enjoy. D'Annunzio belongs politically to these irresponsible circles, and they are European, not just Italian.

I have been amazed often enough in my long acquaintance with Italy at the extremely slender defences which the Church in Italy had built against this kind of thing. The real resisters came again and again not from practising Catholic circles but from small but doughty lay and liberal and socialist circles like those which gathered round Benedetto Croce and later Carlo Rosselli. Outside Italy the countries which had fought and won the Reformation, or the separation of Church and State, often seemed to offer much greater resistance to the mythomanes. Any consideration of D'Annunzio's political antics is incomplete without excursions into this wider European field.

In his poetry—in perhaps a twentieth part of all he wrote—there are great lines, and sometimes real music. When I see a half moon reflected in water, it is D'Annunzio's lines which come to my mind: *"O falce di luna calante...."* There are places on the lower reaches of the Arno below Florence where the silver birches along the banks again bring his lines to memory, just as there are rainy days in spring when the water does fall *"molle come una foglia."* I have often listened to D'Annunzio's poetry being read by Italians and found that in a few chosen passages it has entered into the language not as

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rhetoric but as a kind of music such as no other Italian poetry before D'Annunzio provided.

D'Annunzio very early became a horror of a man. Perhaps it is part of the purgative process of our day that the horrors have to be resuscitated from past to present. Ugliness is all the fashion. Let realism, then, have its day, but let it include, too, a realistic and proportionate analysis of deeper political and historical meanings.

Sylvia Sprigge

Three Lives

Sir Charles Dilke, a Victorian Tragedy. By Roy Jenkins. *Collins*. 25s.

Kitchener: Portrait of an Imperialist. By Philip Magnus. *John Murray*. 30s.

Alfred Lord Milner, The Man of No Illusions. By John Evelyn Wrench. *Eyre & Spottiswoode*. 25s.

Political biography is a form of writing peculiarly British. There are, of course, political biographies in other countries: but they are either, as with the French, limited by the possessiveness with which French families regard their family archives, or as with the Americans, they tend to be part of the general academic output of historical literature.

One thing in common between three important biographies published in this country recently is that not one is by a don. Mr. Roy Jenkins is a rising young politician; Sir Philip Magnus an independent writer of great distinction, and Sir Evelyn Wrench a journalist and publicist who knew both Milner and many other public figures of the era. Mr. Jenkins and Sir Philip Magnus have produced books that are extremely well-composed and admirably written; Sir Evelyn has less talent as a biographer, and his narrative is a very uneven one; what most people remember in connection with Milner is the Milner "kindergarten" which gets only a passing reference, and there is very little about Milner's rôle in the peace-making after the first World War. But the book is redeemed by the profusion of original material. All three books, therefore, qualify by the definition of political biography that one has in mind when one thinks of the best English examples, that is to say biography dominated by an interest in why men enter politics, how they rise in politics, and whether the game is worth the candle. Dons care too little about these questions.

In considering these three lives from this angle, the professional historian might be assisted by the reflection that all three of their subjects were men whose careers fall within the same broad period of British history and who illustrate in different ways the two main movements that characterised it—radical reform and imperialism. It is true that they illustrate it in quite different ways.

Dilke began as a radical, and remained one even after the break in his political career caused by the celebrated and scandalous divorce case that blighted his hopes of preferment. Indeed, Mr. Jenkins suggests that had he remained in politics, the Liberal split over Home Rule might have involved only the secession of the Whigs and not that of the Radicals—the Chamberlainites—and that a more Radical Liberal Party might have made a considerable difference to the emergence of a separate party of Labour. And this consideration gives added importance to the curious and unexplained involvement of Chamberlain in the Dilke case, or in what Mr. Jenkins would on the whole have us regard as the anti-Dilke conspiracy. But Dilke also preached imperial unity, and in his later House of Commons career was much concerned with questions of defence as they affected Britain in the new dangerous 20th-century world.

Kitchener was an imperialist without any radical or democratic tinge, and one who regarded politicians on the whole with that compound of contempt and awe which so often characterises the simple soldier who has to deal with them, though this is not to say that Kitchener was a simple soldier—far from it.

Milner, finally, the most complex and fascinating figure of the three, whose interest for the historian has not been exhausted either by Sir Evelyn's book or by the shorter recent studies of Mr. Edward Crankshaw and Dr. Vladimir Halpérin, faced and failed to resolve this same antithesis between democracy and imperialism. The course of his political patron Goschen carried Milner too from his early Liberalism to Liberal-Unionism, and so into Unionism *tout court*, though without his abandoning an earlier interest in social reform. But seeing the home country largely through the eyes of one whose service had been largely abroad in Egypt and South Africa, Milner could not but judge its institutions in the light of the kind of support they could afford to those carrying the real burdens of imperial rule. By this standard they seemed to him a failure; it was not the social objectives of domestic radicalism, but its instru-

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ment, the mass political party and the demagogues that thrive through it, that disgusted him, and that made him unwilling to seek office at home except in the ultimate emergency of major war.

Kitchener and Milner—though not Dilke—had further to face a problem of the age that the passage of time has rendered more rather than less acute: the problem of race-relations. For Kitchener it was perhaps no problem: the Sudanese were to be conquered and the land brought under control by whatever means were needed—means as savage upon occasion as those of any Roman conqueror. Thereafter, justice certainly; but the justice of the unquestioned superior. For Milner in South Africa, the issue was more complex. It was not that Milner believed that at once, or indeed for generations to come, there could be any questioning the paramountcy of the white race; but it was still true that as between Briton and Boer one difference was in the theory upon which this paramountcy was justified. To hand South Africa over to the Boer element which was the ultimate fruit of the peace of conciliation—and Kitchener would have made a more conciliatory peace and made it sooner—was to accept the Boer view of the place of the native African. Our generation is a witness to the dead end into which this has brought that unhappy country.

Sir Evelyn Wrench admits that like most of his generation he believed that the English Liberals had been right to give South Africa its independence so soon, and that Milner had been wrong. And South Africa's conduct in the first World War seemed a justification of that position. To-day, with the evidence of a growing determination to make South Africa a Boer republic, Sir Evelyn rightly fears that Milner's pessimism may have been justified.

But political biography is not just history. What links the three biographies is not so much the setting as the fact that each in a different way is the life of a failure—and that failure (even when only partial) is always more interesting than success. Dilke's failure is the most obvious, the most dramatic, and the least interesting. Mr. Jenkins may be right, and Dilke have been a very unfortunate man—no more "immoral" than his contemporaries (what an extraordinary sexual underworld Victorian respectability created!)—but merely less lucky. He may be right in thinking that logic pointed to Dilke's ultimate leadership in the party. After all, he became a Cabinet Minister at thirty-nine, an age at which Milner as Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue was respectably, rather than outstandingly, placed. But he finds it difficult to explain why Dilke was thus marked out; he does not seem to have made his name by any great originality of ideas, or through personal magnetism; well-informed (this being rare among Radicals, as Mr. Jenkins points out) and hard-working, but not obviously more than that. It is hard to believe that Mrs. Crawford and her scandal altered the course of history; and this is a case where the biographer's natural temptation to indulge in "might-have-beens" ought to be held in check. Had Dilke got to the top one suspects that it would indeed have been a case of *capax imperii, nisi imperasset.*

With Kitchener the case is different. Here the failure when he was tested is patent but only (outside the circle of those in the know) where posterity was concerned. Kitchener's greatest achievement was to create an image of himself as the strong silent builder of empire which had little to do with his real self—passionate, flamboyant, obsessional—and to impose it on the nation's mind. He seems to have been a not very good commander whose set-backs were somehow relegated to the back of people's minds, and an organiser of great thoroughness and insight whose success was limited by his inability to delegate work to others, his deep suspicion of all those who differed from him, and his lack of political touch. That he was not offered the Viceroyalty of India which he coveted, while Milner turned it down, is the correct measure of the two men. But his own legend was indestructible. There are few sadder and more ironic episodes than that of Kitchener at the War Office during the last few months of his life, with his Cabinet colleagues unable to get rid of him because of the public outcry that would result, and reduced in consequence to making certain that no real responsibility came his way.

But when one comes to Milner again, the question of success and failure as a personal thing is a more difficult and subjective one. On the surface indeed the record of his posts and honours makes the word failure seem almost an absurdity. A man who turns down not only the Viceroyalty, but the succession to Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary and who figures as a key figure in the formidable instrument of government created by Lloyd George to win the war cannot have asked for much more. Coupled with the high offices that he held in Egypt and South Africa, these facts would seem to make Milner's career something of a success story, particularly for a man of partly foreign stock, and with no advantages of family or money. Nor did those who knew him best feel that his worldly triumphs were undeserved. From his Oxford days—and Milner is with Asquith the ultimate product of Balliol at its best and the Union at its best—he made and retained friends, and had indeed an obvious gift for friendship.

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It is rather that one feels that there was in him an element that could not be satisfied with the ordinary *cursus honorum* of the English ruling-class. He was too serious, too determined to put his undoubted talents to the service of his (or rather his adopted) country, too out of touch with, and too disdainful of, ordinary mortals and ordinary politicians too; too unattached, a man without a real home for most of his life. The things he cared about were not on the whole the things that the Edwardians cared about. He did not fit in; and fitting-in is perhaps the ultimate test of political success. In his own way he was as alien as Disraeli in an earlier generation—but Disraeli was a romantic, while Sir Evelyn is surely right when he calls Milner "the man of no illusions." Illusion is part of success.

Max Beloff

New Novels

All in a Lifetime. By WALTER ALLEN. *Michael Joseph.* 15s.

In Two Minds. By MARY CECIL. *Hamish Hamilton.* 15s.

No Longer Human. By OSAMU DAZAI. Translated from the Japanese by DONALD KEENE. *Peter Owen.* 15s.

Running on the Spot. By KEITH WALKER. *New Authors Limited.* 15s.

A Separate Peace. By JOHN KNOWLES. *Secker & Warburg.* 15s.

ALL in a Lifetime is the life and memories, recalled by himself, of Billy Ashted, an old-fashioned working-class dissenter. With his pride in his craft, his Spinozistic hobby of lens-polishing, his violin-playing, his interest in Labour politics, he has just about all the virtues. Whether one finds him a little too good to be true depends, I think, on whether one feels it was a major part of Mr. Allen's intention to make us say "they don't come like that any more." Then there are Billy's sons, all but one doing well as members of the new technocracy. Writers like C. P. Snow have given us the sons' story; Mr. Allen is the first, I think, to give us the father's. Even if this were all, and it is not all, it would be enough to make this book an important event. Billy was born in 1875; his generation is the last link between the modern world and the Victorian age; in a few more years, there will be nobody who can remember so far back. And it is all here, warmly and accurately, in what is undoubtedly a fine piece of work; not just the facts, but what they felt like, the adventures they stood for: hot meat pies, excited discussions about those W.E.A., public library philosophers so beloved, you'll remember, of Mr. Plant in *The Horse's Mouth*; and now, pies and philosophers have both lost their savour. Mr. Allen has chronicled a whole tradition of English life. One of Billy's sons says to him: make your autobiography the material for a footnote in a history book. And in a sense all novels of this kind have that documentary value, because they offer at first-hand what will later be used at second-hand. At the end of the book, Billy feels his life has been narrow: but it had a dignity and homogeneity, an independence, about which we are becoming nostalgic: witness Orwell, Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy*, Billy Rice in *The Entertainer* (he'd remember the pies). Here is a social and historical era which is attaining the power and glamour of myth, particularly for radical writers for whom a century of struggle came to an end with the 1945 Labour government, so that they have been feeling flat ever since. Mr. Allen is in a great tradition, which starts from Dickens and passes through Wells and Orwell (whose *Coming Up for Air* takes Mr. Polly an important stage from history to myth) to Joyce Cary, with whose breadth, range, and zest for life *All in a Lifetime* may properly be compared.

But there is, I think, something more to say. I admit to having felt a slight uneasiness about Billy himself: he seemed almost too perfect a vehicle for what he chronicles. But the evenness of the tone, the long retrospect, may lead to something more than documentary. Billy is old, he is all the time rejudging the past—or not so much rejudging it as docketing it away, tidying it up, as an old man tidies away a lifetime's accumulation. The battle is over, the excitement has abated. Things that once caused pain and indignation seem to matter less now, they are just an old man's memories: for instance, the fall of Billy's friend George Thompson, a Labour leader whose head joined Dilke's on the Establishment's platter and provided both sides with a moral to point to. The novel ends with Billy facing death with the thing that now means most to him: not social, political, or personal memories but long-playing records of classical music: something from the past which the present has actually improved but which exists outside change. It's a moving close, and it seemed to shift the whole meaning of the

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book. It didn't make Billy more real, but it suggested that Mr. Allen's main theme was not sixty glorious years, but age, resignation, above all the perspectives of time, into which, with each life's end, both history and myth vanish.

In Two Minds is the story of a mental breakdown seen from inside the mind of the sufferer, Clara Hammond, a nice artistic girl in love with a saintly married man whose wife is a neurotic too ("only she gloomed and I laugh"). This man, Edmund, is no more than sketched in as a prop for Clara. She is really the only character, and soon, as her nervous state worsens, the outside world fades and is distorted, things said to her get translated and confused—this is all very skilfully conveyed in the writing—and we are left with Clara conducting a queer nagging dialogue, at times sinister, at times incongruously funny (as though the author couldn't resist the cross-talk possibilities), with her *alter ego*, who is trying to take possession of her and drive her mad. Such a story could easily get bogged down in private imagery, and much of Clara's past is only hinted at, as if we knew it as well as she did. What saves it from being mere psychiatric documentary is the author's literary skill, which is considerable and original, and the endearing doggedness of Clara herself. In her, gaiety is stronger than guilt and fear, and in the end defeats them. The flashes of sad helpless longing, as she struggles to keep in touch with reality, are moving. You could say that this is a study of the struggle, common to all with imagination, though here intensified, to grow up, to throw off one's past and one's private fantasies and make the sort of adjustments necessary for life in the world. On this level *In Two Minds* isn't at all just another fashionable snake-pit saga, but a story of how an individual personality establishes itself even when the odds are against it.

No such happy ending awaits the reader of *No Longer Human*, a remarkable and depressing novel by the Japanese writer Osamu Dazai, who committed suicide in 1948. The setting is modern Tokyo, indistinguishable, in its opportunities for degradation, from any Western metropolis; and the whole tone and idiom seem Western. Dazai was evidently familiar with French and English literature (he quotes it) and above all with Dostoievsky, whose extraordinary prophetic books seem to contain every possible thought and experience of the modern consciousness. The hero of Dazai's novel, an alcoholic and a drug-addict, is in fact offered to us as a "good boy, an angel," a saint in Dostoievskian terms. He reminded me more of Camus' *Étranger*, the same horrifying existential world of complete acceptance; though Yozo's indifference to other people goes much further; is, indeed, absolute. He admits that he is "congenitally unable to take much interest in other people"; he disposes of society by simply saying that it is the individual, and decides that modern civilisation has no possible connection with himself. We leave him, after a bout in the asylum, coughing blood, pensioned off in the country, a total wreck. This book may be a *tour-de-force* of nihilism: its only effect on me was to set me wondering about the intensity of Dazai's insight into despair. Was it just himself, or had it anything to do with his atomically-defeated country, whose ancient régime was destroyed? Is there a spiritual link between this book and Hiroshima?

Schools and colleges continue to provide happy hunting-grounds for the Anglo-Saxon novelist. *Running on the Spot* is set in a Scottish university, where the gowns are red but everything else is pretty familiar—the hapless, cheerful, scruffy hero reading—or not reading —mediæval history, the two girls, one luscious and tarty, one nice and refined, the boozing, the disastrous tea-party with the professor. One of the publisher's readers forestalls the inevitable comparison with *Lucky Jim* by making it himself and then saying that the books, though in the same genre, are really quite different. Ad-

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mittedly, Oliver Plant refuses the job offered him by the luscious girl's oil-baron father, preferring to stick it out for a mediocre degree and a job on the cultural fringe; but this wry refusal to desert the sinking ship is well in line with the new nonconforming patriotism, like Archie Rice's refusal to go to Canada: "You can't get draught Bass there." But the real difference between Mr. Walker and Mr. Amis is that Mr. Amis's jokes have a wild originality: he takes slapstick situations and turns them into humour that reveals as well as chronicles. Mr. Walker's jokes are heavily underlined, but almost completely unadorned: the scene in the restaurant, for instance, is given in so much detail that one can see the climax—*i.e.*, Oliver going out to be sick—coming several courses away. Mr. Walker has a nice ear for ex-servicemen's dialogue, though, and a nice eye for the possibilities of a situation. He only needs to find one whose possibilities haven't been exhausted.

A Separate Peace, also a first novel, by an American writer, has real distinction. It is set in a fashionable New England private (*i.e.*, public) school during the last war. The two main characters are complementary: the athletic Finny and the introvert Gene, who tells the story. Finny involves Gene in a series of "dares"; Gene unconsciously resents Finny's desire to dominate him though another part of him wants this. Finny breaks his leg in an accident caused by Gene, and from then on refuses to recognise the existence of the war; having always been intensely active he cannot believe in any struggle in which he himself cannot take part. At the same time he continues to dominate Gene: "Listen, pal, if I can't play sports you're going to play them for me." Gene consents to play along with Finny's fantasy: each needs the other. But "reality" breaks in: their school friend Lepellier enlists, but runs away from the army. His return, and his first-hand suffering, make the war true and bring to an end the "separate peace." But as the result of another accident, brought about indirectly through another boy's attempt to prove Gene guilty of the first accident, Finny dies, with the strange bond between him and Gene still inviolate. The real theme is the contrast between the individual struggle, *e.g.*, the struggle on the sports field, and the abstract, collective one against a faraway, nebulous enemy. It is handled here with great sureness of touch, unadulterated by any of the conventional school-story stuff. Though the characters are real boys, they stand for adults too. Mr. Knowles' talent will be watched with interest: is he the successor to Salinger for whom we have been waiting so long?

K. W. Gransden

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LETTERS

A Defence of Jazzetry

Not that it needs defending against Frank Kermode's generous notice ["An Apology for Poezzy," ENCOUNTER, May]. It's poetry that needs defence (again, not from Kermode), and, as criticism is largely controlled by failure poets and novelists, this defence must come through example and use. Jazzetry is an experiment in use.

In the last ten years poetry has gone seedy. Larkin set the downhill pace, encouraged by critics for their better ease and by prose authors to their further advantage. A troupe of neat academic twits hopped willingly after. Well, that was a fair expression of our austerity decadence. We know what they have to say. The influence of their thin, sallow volumes is over. People are anxious for poetry that speaks up and off the page.

Twice Kermode mentions the fixation of poetry to print. Of course poetry must be printed; so must music. But, unlike prose, an affair whose existence was and is determined by the invention of printing processes and the antics of booksellers, poetry need not be dependent on the book. It suits its mother, memory, and its home, the market-place.

Since the 'thirties when Auden and Spender gave their best, poets have lost all confidence in themselves and their art. Faced by plain indifference to their efforts, the outcome of their indifference to living conditions, poets have concentrated on the crisp, cramped, subjective lyric. These fit the page well enough, but never strike from it. Who, for instance, has any inclination to read the tedious romancing of Messrs. Holloway, Kirkup, and Conquest, aloud? Only the poets themselves. And, as Kermode notes, they don't know how to read aloud.

This lyrical mode is seen as the last stronghold of poetry. Thus, even as they write for the page, they abandon narrative, plot, character, and situation, all of which are inventions of our verse and dramatic tradition; all of which fit well on the page or in the mouth. They have chosen the worst of both possible worlds. Lyricism alone cannot cope with present living experience.

Add to this literary ineptitude the facts that poets are unrewarded moneywise, ignored by Wm. Hickey, shunned in theatres, employed only by provincial or obscure American universities, marry early and die late, and couldn't tell you who won the last cup final—and you have the picture.

The poet needs allies. For different reasons, serious jazz musicians have as difficult a time getting their works about as poets. The first examples of successful combination between verse and jazz came from the West Coast. They are not part of Beatnik carry-on (I imply no criticism of Ginsberg who is without doubt a major writer), nor are they a recent development. The best model we had for *Red Bird* was a reading of Ferlinghetti's *Dog* by Bob Dorough to his own *Quintet* recorded in Hollywood (World Pacific Records, WP. 1244; I believe Vogue are going to issue this record here in the autumn).

Out of the thirteen poems broadcast I count four wholly successful. That is to say, there was no competition between voice and music, both were audible and conjoint. Some of the others failed because the balance was poor (the experiment presents new problems in electric recording), some because the arrangements were too literal and romantic, some because the poems were too oblique and complicated. Pound says somewhere: put words to music and you'll soon find out where you can whittle the words down. During the rehearsals of *Red Bird* a number of whittlings happened.

For me, the most useful point in Kermode's notice lies in his query: Can poezzy be made of verse in which there is less sensuality and more sense? Can the combination work with, say, narrative, didactic, or satirical poetry? The question is vital, for it suggests the direction which poetry must go if it is to be more public, as well as developing a technique for getting it out of books.

I picked the Neruda versions from the rest of my work because they are impressionistic, sensual lyric. There is barely a thread of narrative, no character or situation. They seemed the best poems I had with which to start the experiment. The composers could easily develop ideas to parallel or contrast the stated mood and image. The poems could be tailored to fit the music without any vital link of argument being lost.

It is rash to discuss further experiments before they have taken place. However, by the time this is printed we shall have tried to embody and answer Kermode's criticism. A jazzetry, using two narrative poems of mine and some short epigrammatic fables will have been given at the Royal Court. We shall try to keep the thread of the story running in the listener's head, and, at the same time, provide a musical structure in which it can move. Only a few people will be able to hear it, a serious disadvantage.*

A word about the criticism we have been offered. It has for the most part been useless and rather silly; in some cases, openly hostile. For example: someone called John Metcalf condemned the programme as "pretentious," "vulgar," with "intellectual jazz." He couldn't understand a thing. Finally, he said that the whole notion of putting spoken words to music was impossible anyway. Others said that "indoor music" won't match "outdoor words." Some found it "too sexy" or "couldn't hear the words" and when they could hear them found them "bad." Still more suggested using different bands, and one muggins thought that a guitar accompaniment was the right thing "because Neruda is a Spaniard." Well. . .

Metcalf's approach posits that the experiment as such is worthless. This relates nicely to the whole notion of experiment in the arts. Various people have convinced themselves that (heaving a great sigh of relief) experiment is all over and done with. The 'twenties were "experimental"—and that ends the matter. Conduct an experiment, ask for their

* It was a success. We were asked to repeat it the following Sunday.

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attention, and they cannot get enough sustenance from their arguments to support their anger. "Intellectual-jazz"—my eye! Kinsey plays the same music three nights a week in the Flamingo Club to a large audience who leave school at fifteen and have never heard of ENCOUNTER and will never hear of John Metcalf. The Goons have the right notion. They read McGonigal to tuba and bagpipes on the telly. *Red Bird on a Coal Heap*, they called it—and very funny it was too.

Checking up as best one can, I have heard nobody say that they were bored, a number of people want it on record, many listened to the repeat. Next time we shall try to improve and clarify the whole business.

Some professional warnings. If you want to experiment using recorded jazz, your own tape-recorder and mixer, fall to, and good luck; Blake, Suckling, Pope, Milton (yes, Milton), Dryden, and Hardy all fit rather well. But if you want to do it live with new poems, remember that it costs a lot of money to get a good result. The B.B.C. invested almost £400 in *Red Bird*. It's no good getting up in front of a combo and reading. The result is hideous, except, maybe, for the performers. Choose the poems for length and clarity, make the arrangements with the words placed uppermost. There is no fear that the music will be forgotten. You'll have to argue for this. As Kermode says, musicians are not giving away their gains.

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

London

Aristocratic Army

I HAVE read Simon Raven's paper ["Perish by the Sword," ENCOUNTER, May] with great interest. When you ask for my comments you must bear in mind that in 1898, when I was gazetted, I joined a totally different type of army from that of to-day. It was an aristocratic army, feudal in the sense that it was grounded on leadership and followership, in which, with few exceptions, the leaders were the sons of gentlemen, and more frequently than not eldest sons—the privileged son. When I went to Sandhurst we were not taught to behave like gentlemen, because it never occurred to anyone that we could behave otherwise. We were taught a lot of obsolete tactics, as in every army of that day; did a tremendous lot of useless drill; but never heard a word about "responsibility," "loyalty," "guts," etc., because—so I suppose—these were held to be the natural perquisites of gentlemen.

The men—followers—of that period were a rough lot, simple, tough, illiterate; largely recruited from down-and-outs, men who had got into trouble, vagabonds, and a sprinkling of the sons and grandsons of N.C.Os. and private soldiers—military families—who generally became N.C.Os. There were therefore two distinct classes (really castes) by birth. On the whole the men looked up to their officers, whether they were efficient or inefficient, and the officers did not look down on their men—why should they? I cannot recall any like Mr. Raven's examples, A., B., C., and D. The idea of an officer imposing his will on his men never entered his head, because one class was so superior and the

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other so inferior that it was unnecessary to do so. The superior could not lose caste should he play or mix with his men. I remember on my first tour as Orderly Officer the Q.M.S. was late for meat issue, and as I thought he had risked it because I was a novice, I put him under arrest. When this was reported to the Adjutant, he took me aside and said: "Strictly speaking you were right, but actually speaking you were an ass, so don't do it again"—and I didn't.

Soon after came the South African War, and I can remember nothing like Mr. Raven's 1955 train journey from Mombasa to Nairobi. We all, officers and men, travelled up-country in open coal trucks—there were no couchettes or dining-cars (!). For meals we halted at wayside stations, brewed tea, and were dished out with bully and biscuits. The officers may have fared a bit better than the men, but slightly so, because mess stores were restricted almost to vanishing point. Had the men been treated as they were on the Mombasa train there would have been a volcanic explosion, if only because feudal lords have a personal regard for their retainers. The following incident may illuminate this.

On our homeward-bound journey, my battalion travelled in two trains, all third-class this time: I in the first with my company and three others, and the remaining four and H.Q. in the second. At Bloemfontein one of my ruffians stole a case of condensed milk and was promptly arrested by the station police. In came the second train and with it the Colonel—the Hon. A. E. Dalzell, later Earl of Cernworth.

"What's happening here?" he shouted, when he saw the culprit being dragged along the platform.

I tried to explain.

"What!" he roared, "arrest one of *my* men, damn you, damn you, what do you mean? Mr. Stapelton! Fall H Company in! Fix bayonets and clear the station!"

Thus for the first and last time in my life I found myself heading a bayonet charge—and the culprit got off scot free, because his feudal overlord was in such a rage that he forgot all about him.

Of the present-day democratic army I know next to nothing. Like the old aristocratic one it must have its good points, and is probably more efficient; but to me it is folly to try to mix the two. A gentleman is born and not made. It is probably true that it takes three generations to fashion one, and—so it would appear from Mr. Raven's experiences, if you try to make them synthetically, you get neither an aristocracy nor a democracy, instead a cadocracy. One sees this everywhere today—among rich and poor, on the roads, and in the factories. I repeat it again, gentlemen are not turned out like sausages; they are men of engrained honour, of principle, and of decent behaviour; and some of the finest I have met in my long life have belonged to the humblest classes. Because this caste, rather than class, is becoming extinct is, in my humble opinion, one of the great factors at the bottom of the present world turmoil.

MAJ.-GEN. J. F. C. FULLER

Forest Gate
Crowborough, Sussex

I READ WITH fascination Simon Raven's test-tube study of the shaping of the military mentality. Never having thought much about the backgrounds of the things I detest, I've been mainly concerned in writing about its end-products—this despite attending two Officer Candidate Schools and having lived for several war years on both sides of the brass curtain. Broadly speaking, his indictment also holds for the United States. Money and position aren't as crucial here, but certain other training factors bring about the same dehumanisation. One way or another, both the British and American military factories are mass-producing much the same type of commissioned personnel, except that ours are more cynical and yours more insufferable.

Pragmatically the caste system works. The Russians found that out in the 1920's and 1930's, after trying to abandon it; and Chu Teh never even abandoned it, although he modified it. On the other hand, it warps both officers and privates as human beings, and it certainly manufactures personalities who tend to accelerate the thrust towards war. Mr. Raven denies the latter, but he is referring to lieutenants and such. I would say that age and brass harden the military arteries. Figures like Patton, Haig, and MacArthur are beautiful examples of the gulf between professional warriors and men with normal respect for human life, normal tolerance, normal good nature. Very few warriors ever bridge this gulf, and Mr. Raven shows us why. Thus, whenever the twain meet on common ground, it is almost accidental. To-day, this accident exists, but only at the level of high policy. Socially, morally, and intellectually, the indoctrinated officer is a man apart, a man almost to be pitied.

Mr. Raven says: "Nor is there reason to look for change"; but in time all this too will pass, for mass armies are as doomed as the battleship.

LEON WOLFF

Los Angeles, U.S.A.

I HAVE read Simon Raven's article with very great enjoyment indeed, and I can well believe that all he says is true. It is a great mistake to suppose that one can change the nature of an officer-corps by broadening its social base. When between 1890 and 1914 the expansion of the German Army made it necessary to admit bourgeois officers into the officer corps—what William II euphemistically called the *Adel der Gesinnung*—the new entrants outdid the old nobility in their brash insolence and militarism. In general, conscription has always tended not to civilise the Army but to militarise the population—the effect of national service in Algeria on the French is very much a case in point.

The other important point which Raven makes is that of the absence of professionalism in the British officer. This, again, I endorse, but think he over-states it. It is a quality which tends to develop a little later in their careers, at Staff College level; when they suddenly realise (*a*) that promotion matters, and (*b*) that promotion *does* depend on professional ability. In their thirties army officers tend to become much more serious and dedicated, and their horizon is no longer bounded by the regimental mess. The emphasis on *morale* which the young infantry officer gets drummed into him is

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designed to give him the complete self-assurance which is essential on the battlefield, maddening as it is anywhere else. The complexities of administration, strategy, logistics, military law *et hoc genus omne*, come at a rather later stage.

MICHAEL HOWARD

London, S.W.7

"Leavis against Eliot"

MR. GRIGSON, in the striking ethical demonstration you print in the April ENCOUNTER (that my attention should have been called to it will not surprise you) refers to *Commentary* as "well-known"; but if he had really supposed it to be well-known in this country he could hardly have hoped that, by the method of decency and delicacy he demonstrates, it would be I who would be discredited rather than himself. *Commentary*, published in New York and addressed to a special American intellectual public, is in fact not at all widely known here, and few of your readers will have seen the article that Mr. Grigson adduces as justifying the treatment he favours me with. I had been asked by *Commentary* to make Mr. Eliot's last volume of critical essays an occasion for appraising his criticism in general, and anyone who reads my article will see that it is concerned with *that*—with the proposed examination and critique. It contains nothing of the kind that Mr. Grigson imputes when he proposes that, as a fair retribution for the impertinences he accuses me of, writers like himself should practise their art in gratuitous publicities about my alleged private life. The postulate from which I start my critique is that Mr. Eliot is a major figure, not only as poet, but as critic: "that rare thing, a fine intelligence in literary criticism." That is, his work demands to be taken seriously, and to take it seriously is to enquire into its peculiar characteristics, its distinctive odd limitations and self-contradictions. One cannot do that without discussing the attitudes towards life, the habits of valuation expressed in the documents and give them their significance. There is nothing in my article that does not refer to the published evidence strictly in this way, and come under this necessity.

Mr. Grigson intimates that it is patently absurd to judge that "Tradition and the Individual Talent," for all its authoritative note and its reputation, is in an oddly significantly way *not* a cogent piece of thinking. In being able to do this—and with such easy confidence—he confirms my view that radical enquiry into the nature of Mr. Eliot's achievement and influence as a critic was very much called for.

F. R. LEAVIS

Cambridge

[GEOFFREY GRIGSON writes: *"As a matter of fact it was the editor who attached 'well-known' in my article to the first mention of* Commentary. *But it is not so obscure as to permit Mr. Leavis to hide in its Trans-Atlantic pages from anybody who cares to discover all that he wrote. I listed more than enough to back what I call my critique of what Mr. Leavis calls his critique. Mr. Leavis should look at his own words. To affirm that something is 'radically destructive' about a writer isn't postulating that he has a fine critical intelligence: it is destroying him. To say he hasn't lived, is to say he has been dead. There could be ways of saying it less sickening and foolish than Mr. Leavis's."*]

THE Eliot-Leavis controversy is not just a literary one, but social, political, historical. So it is not really relevant to introduce Eliot the poet into the matter. The confrontation here is not between a creative-writer-who-is-also-a-critic on the one hand, and a "mere" critic on the other; but between two critics who have both been concerned with society, not just literature. As such, I am not sure Leavis is all that much less interesting than Eliot: *Scrutiny* is scrutinised in America; and in England, Leavis's influence on our grammar schools in the last twenty years has been considerable, both directly and through several able disciples. In fact, Leavis is the master (not always acknowledged) of a whole generation of the new articulate, the intelligent outsiders who have made their way without influence, just using their literary wits.

Mr. Eliot is *U*, conservative, cosmopolitan, highbrow, and mandarin; an acceptance man. Mr. Leavis is *non-U*, radical, nonconformist, intensely English: hence his interest in the English novel, the instrument of social passion and local radicalism, the source of so much of our knowledge of life. Eliot does not seem to care much for fiction, preferring, as one would expect him to, international poets like Dante. Equally natural is his elevation of Joyce, a non-English, international highbrow, unconcerned with the battles of English society. And, of course, Leavis elevates D. H. Lawrence: intensely English, intensely committed, a social critic, a radical nonconformist, who cocked the snook of the century at the Establishment: a snook they still remember with anger, while *Ulysses* is just a dirty book from Paris for the highbrows. If you are a rebel you will like Lawrence; if you don't like him, it doesn't *necessarily* mean that you are repressed and disapprove of divorce; but it almost certainly means you're an Establishment man. It was a Cambridge-Bloomsbury man called Morgan, with a private income, who spoke out for Lawrence: "the greatest imaginative novelist of my generation."

One's objection must be to having Lawrence and Joyce presented as a sort of see-saw, one up, one down, according to who's operating the playground. Since both writers have taken their place in literature, the see-saw theory is absurd by Eliot's critical premises, though not on Leavis's, since radicalism is an all-or-nothing creed.

Like all radicals, Leavis is passionately concerned: he uses the term "engaged" with as much ferocity as Sartre. About Eliot there clings the faintest suggestion that it is bad form to be too concerned, to go into too much detail; in some of his writing there is the oracular amateur flavour of Toryism.

Ultimately, it seems to me, the whole of recent English social and literary history—outsiders, angry young men, Hoggart's book, etc.—is the result of the clash of two traditions. Leavis once thought Eliot was on the side of the saved, because he mixed

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up Eliot the poet (and those parts of Eliot's criticism, *e.g.*, on the metaphysicals, which tie up with Eliot's poetry) with Eliot the Tory highbrow. Leavis now sees that his own aims as a critic—the moral reform of society, the nonconformist zeal for improvement here and now—are totally opposed to Eliot's. In his poetry, Eliot has worked out of himself the rebel of which there is a bit in every great conformist. To what extent Leavis himself is embittered by his own failure to get inside—there is a bit of the conformist in every true radical—is a question which takes us on to personal ground where I shan't go—though as to the personal side, I don't see why Leavis was "impertinent" to postulate sexual disgust in Eliot: I should have thought you could hardly help seeing it.

K. W. GRANSDEN

London

THE portion of Mr. Geoffrey Grigson's autobiography that appeared in your April issue under the heading *Leavis against Eliot* was a very damaging piece of work—damaging both to Mr. Grigson, which does not matter, and to ENCOUNTER, which is regrettable. ENCOUNTER is one of our few remaining journals having pretensions to a high standard of intellectual exchange.

J. C. F. LITTLEWOOD

Richmond, Yorks

On Translating "Zhivago"

I DID not know when I wrote my review that a number of the things I objected to in the translation of *Doctor Zhivago* published in New York by Pantheon Books occurred only in the American edition, and I sympathise with Mr. Hayward and Mrs. Harari in the dismay they must have felt when they were confronted with the omissions and disfigurements which, for reasons that remain mysterious—had been inflicted on their text in the Pantheon office—where their preface and many of their notes also were amputated, and their, I understand, more or less literal translation of the poems at the end into prose were discarded for freer renderings which are, however, neither prose nor verse.

Mrs. Harari's defences [ENCOUNTER, May] of her own careless renderings sometimes strike me, however, as rather naïve. I hereby admit "in print" my mistake about *Do svidanya na tom svetye*, and also my confusion of vaults with domes. But Mrs. Harari did not give us the vaults either: she did not translate *svody* at all. To take the other passages in the order in which they are mentioned: 1. The word *otliv* indicates a "chatoyement" of colour. The American revisers here had the right idea with *shimmer*, but left out the variation between chocolate and coffee. Mrs. Harari's version does not allow the fields to shimmer but assumes that they were simultaneously chocolate-coloured and coffee-coloured. 2. I have written to a Russian friend about this and have received the following answer: "*Pomeshatel'stvo* has no connection with sadness* whatsoever. As far as I know, it always means a mental derangement or aberration. *Tikhoe pomeshatel'stvo* is a colloquial expression (*slovechko*) of our century. I suppose it was coined as a contrast to *buinoe pomeshatel'stvo* (violent insanity), which is literally used as a medical term. Translating literally, I would say: 'They lived through another day in a state of mild insanity.' Translating not literally, I would say: 'They went through another day of complete unreality.'" 5. In my version, the word *zemli* has, I am sorry to say, indeed been dropped out. But surely *ugar* is used here not in the sense of dizzy excitement but for the hot smell of frying pancakes. 6. In the case of certain Russian verbs, the prefix *za* indicates that the action is beginning. *Zarydat'* is one of these. In other cases—*zakhodit'*, *zaplatit'*, etc.—this prefix has a quite different force. So there is no point in saying "if this verb-form were translated as 'began to' each time it occurred . . . , the translation would . . . be very clumsy." It would not be merely clumsy but impossible. 7. What is the difference in sense between "The weather was struggling to recover" and "The weather was struggling against disease"? The metaphor is that of a sick person who is trying to recuperate. I do not know why Mrs. Harari believes that this section takes place in autumn. In the section just before, it is said to be winter. 8. A *kalancha*—see Dahl—is not a belfry. A belfry is a tower with bells: *kolokol'nya*. These *kalanchy* may, I suppose, have been watchtowers—one of Dahl's definitions. I do not understand what Mrs. Harari means when she speaks of "transliteration" here. There is no question of transliteration. Nor do I understand what she means when she says—or seems to say—that she did not think it a good idea to hold the reader up by including objects familiar to Russians but unfamiliar in England. If she consistently applied this principle—substituting, as she has done in this case, the more for the less familiar—she would have Moscow looking like Manchester.

EDMUND WILSON

Wellfleet, Cape Cod, Mass., U.S.A.

Race, Ghana, and Freedom

MR. PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE's letter from Ghana [ENCOUNTER, May] is welcome for its outspoken terms. He achieves deep insights in places: for instance, his treatment of Dr. Nkrumah's use of Parliament to create a dictatorship; of the Opposition's need for a revolutionary change of tactics, of the dilemma of British officials whose work is exploited to authoritarian ends, and of the reasons why Dr. Nkrumah's dictatorship will not be a practical possibility. His main theme—that the serious threat to Ghana's parliamentary democracy was only to be expected—is, however, based upon three highly questionable grounds.

(1) Was Ghana altogether too fractionally tribal to be transmogrified into a new nation on March 6th, 1957? Not at all so, I submit. Nationhood precedes self-government and independence since the requisite degree of inter-tribal solidarity is necessary to secure the withdrawal of Imperialism in the first

* This was our misprint, and not a mistranslation. It is, correctly, "madness" on p. 393 of the English edition of *Zhivago*.—ED.

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place. We had, as Gold Coasters, fifty years of inter-tribal co-operation. Christian missionaries taught the lesson in church and school. Our transition from a subsistence- to a cash-economy tells the rest of the story: the need for each to pay tax to the British, then later to buy British goods, quickly overrode any squeamishness about sharing employment with men from other tribes. Imperial domination under an absentee hereditary monarchy helped to unite us for a common life generally. Inter-tribal solidarity organised against Imperialism constitutes nationalism, which invests that solidarity with tremendous thrust. The effect of that thrust was first fully felt in Dr. Nkrumah's triumph in our first general election under a new constitution for self-government (1951). This victory marks, I submit, the critical change to nationhood. The question whether the critical level of inter-tribal co-operation has been attained is evidently a matter of definition.

Between 1951 and March 6th, 1957, Dr. Nkrumah's government was quietly building the administrative apparatus of the country. But, not noticing the great change in the size, structure, and temper of the Opposition, it felt that it had another vital task. This was to annihilate the Opposition, which it believed to be plotting the "tribal disintegration of the nation." The belief was eminently false. Broadly speaking, there was no reality of "tribalism" until the Government created one of exaggerated size out of an old chimera: it manœuvred the Opposition into advocating merely regional demands, which are inaccurately identified with "tribalism." The ineptitude of Opposition propaganda aided the manœuvre, and the use of regional names to describe the most powerful of several tribes in a region—as "Ashanti" for both that region and tribe—established the bogus identity. So, the Opposition's advocacy of valid regional claims mechanically panics the Government into crushing intervention to preserve Ghana from supposed disintegration.

Even so, the Opposition's growth from a tiny conservative minority into a powerful progressive challenger of Dr. Nkrumah's Convention People's Party is amazing. The Opposition comprises a small traditionalist group of the Chiefs and their followers, a big group of educated, westernised intelligentsia with many leftist graduates, and above all, a bustling mass of militant, radical youth, mostly urban and hardly schooled. It grew by seizing its chance in each of the four regions of Ghana. To a powerful local grievance, it added its charges of rank Government inefficiency, corruption, lavish financing of the CPP from public funds, and dictatorial tendencies. Always pleading "tribalism," the Government rejected quite genuine claims flatly and so precipitated violence and local declarations of emergency. The Opposition has nonetheless substantially maintained its new strength, except in the North where many have chosen temporary fellow-travelling with the CPP in order to maintain a livelihood. In Accra, the growth of the radical Opposition was alarming enough to merit the statutory detention—without trial for five years—of its entire Executive. The value of underground work and efficient propaganda is now admitted. Government persecution is purging the Opposition of faint-hearts, and assuring its national coherence while inflating CPP ranks with unwilling fellow-travellers. Meanwhile, the cost of living keeps rising, political grievances are spreading, the CPP has lost its sense of mission, and power is exposing their embarrassing limitations. The Opposition's electoral fortunes are not "zero," they are fair and steadily increasing.

(2) The second ground of Mr. Worsthorne's main theme is that Ghana, being as he thinks, not yet a nation, any other leader would have run the country by Dr. Nkrumah's methods. This conclusion falls with the one asserting Ghana's tribal incoherence. Furthermore, Dr. Nkrumah's methods are due to his own intolerance, and to two serious misconceptions tenaciously held by the CPP. One is the wild exaggeration of the charismatic function of Dr. Nkrumah as leader; the other is the view that parliamentary sovereignty means the tenure of state power by Parliament alone—evidently a misreading of Dicey, or of "Professors Wade and Phillips," as that famous work is known to the CPP, or of Leninist "democratic centralism." The charismatic function is exemplified by the cult of Dr. Nkrumah's personality to an extent broadly familiar in continental Europe. The constitutional error is shown by the concentration of ever more power in the very limited hands of Dr. Nkrumah as Premier, while denying the "tribal" victims of those powers any access to the Courts of Justice. The operation of these two misconceptions underlies the present threat to the rule of law.

The Ghanaian facet—and that alone—of the "African Personality," which Mr. Worsthorne does not mention, is said to consist in Dr. Nkrumah's adaptation to Ghana of the rule of law in a welfare state. The idea is splendid, but its operation bizarre. Since 1951 when he won power, Dr. Nkrumah has never been able to tell us the content of this idea. Where are the criteria for testing of any new project? Is the next deportation a genuine indication of "Personality" or a sign of failure? What specific substitutes for liberties abrogated by deportation or statutory detention does "the Personality" afford? So far, the African Personality seems to be but a technique for avoiding resolute criticism. Not every Ghanaian leader would run Ghana thus.

(3) The third ground of Mr. Worsthorne's main theme falls with the first two. Britain was right—not wrong—to grant Ghana her independence in 1957. There might otherwise have been a West African precedent for the terror in Cyprus.

As to Mr. Worsthorne's minor points: the bull in the china shop analogy is both indelicate, and wrong, as I have shown. Again, it may be unwise to scrap parliamentary democracy rather than to see it mocked: every social institution inculcates some respect for its purposes. Further, the rift between Nkrumah and Ghedemah is entirely personal: it poses the question which of them is better suited to head their bourgeoisified party of bureaucratic *nouveaux riches*. Then, any Dominion government without discrimination (Statute of Westminster, 1931)—may write the Queen's speeches when she is in that dominion. Also, whenever a black man is an eye-rolling clown or a menacing nationalist, the mystery of the Native Mind is entirely of the white

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man's making. Lastly, Dr. Nkrumah's government, for all its faults, could not conceivably be accused of plotting the armed conquest of any African country.

W. A. N. ADUMUA-BOSSMAN

Accra

MR. WORSTHORNE is not content with the special instance of Ghana, he also goes on to generalise. Democracy is "a china shop" and any African—from some remarks it would appear any Asian too—must be a bull in it. He may be a gentle bull, or he may be rough and roaring like Dr. Nkrumah; in any case some of the china must surely be smashed.

Mr. Worsthorne is not the first to insist that the exercise of democracy is impossible except to a very few favoured Western peoples. But he, like his predecessors in the use of this argument, is wrong, and this has been proved by the experience of at least some under-developed countries newly independent within the last twelve years. In such countries, where democracy seems to have failed, it is not because of any inherent defect in the people as a whole but because of the selfishness of the élite and the absence of that seriously functioning opposition against whom Mr. Worsthorne animadverts. An opposition does mean a certain delay in decision and implementation, yet because of the benefits from the full consideration that its existence entails, its total effect is *beneficial* even to the impatient government.

Mr. Worsthorne's mind is perhaps best revealed in his discussion of the lack of race consciousness in West Africa. This, he implies in effect, makes for greater lack of understanding between the races. When white was white and black was black and never the twain did meet, at least on the intellectual and social planes there was no risk of misunderstanding. Presumably, understanding was so limited as to amount to incomprehension. But now that race consciousness has disappeared, misunderstanding has increased. Sad result! Mr. Worsthorne presumably has never come across instances of Anglo-German misunderstanding, or Franco-Italian, or British-American.

The desire to break up the Commonwealth that animates so much of Mr. Worsthorne's writing in ENCOUNTER (see his previous article, "The Idea of Colonialism," ENCOUNTER, December) also seems to have its origin in this same intellectual aversion to colour. The preponderance of the coloured element in the Commonwealth probably seems to him against the interests of its white section. He actually suggests not only a breaking up of the Commonwealth but a combination of Britain with Europe and America as a counter-weight to the newly independent colonial territories. This he urges in the name of *realpolitik*, for the ex-colonial territories are bound to be ungrateful and inimical. Mr. Worsthorne probably does not know that at no time in the past were there more British citizens in a country like India, that relations between them and the people of the country were never more friendly, that respect for characteristic British institutions was never higher, and that their working was hardly ever studied with greater care as that of models to be looked up to. Very similar feelings undoubtedly prevail in Pakistan and Malaya, to mention but two recently independent countries. The break-up of the Commonwealth would be a most retrograde step from the point of view not only of the Asian and African countries but also from that of Britain. As for Mr. Worsthorne's apprehension about the difficulty of having undemocratic governments like Ghana within a Commonwealth dedicated to democratic principles, an association that has managed to retain its identity with those principles while containing within it a country so far away from them as South Africa, is scarcely likely to find it insuperable.

Mr. Worsthorne would seem to have been born outside his time. He is, however, doing his best to repair that misfortune. The stern, unbending Tory of former ages to whom independence for the colonies would have been anathema, and equality with the lesser breeds without the law incredible, has now to content himself with pointing out how inevitably democracy must fail when attempted by the coloured races and with expressing his horror at the lack of wisdom that would cause old England to continue to be associated with them.

A. D. GORWALA

Bombay

"Daily Graphic"

I REFER to page 9 of your issue of May 1959, where comments are made by your contributor on the *Daily Graphic* of Accra.

I founded the paper and have at all times been finally responsible for the management. The policy of the paper—not to intervene in partisan Ghanaian politics—has been unchanged from the beginning. The British management was never warned—politely or otherwise—by the Ghanaian Government, and publishes criticisms by responsible members of the Opposition as it has always done. Mr. Bankole Timothy, who was a feature writer not the principal leader writer, was deported for his political activities after office hours.

The whole venture still seems to me "a splendid experiment in black-and-white journalistic co-operation."

CECIL H. KING

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

Letter from Leipzig

FOR a decade now the West Germans have been on good, if perfunctory terms, with their *"armen verwandten,"* their poor relations, on the other side of the zonal frontier. They sent them parcels whenever the Communist régime placed no special obstacle in the way, admitted the refugees to the amenities of the Federal Republic, and encouraged by radio broadcasts those who remained there not to abandon their belief in "indivisible Germany." In general, the Germans in the West have exhibited a rather tactful sympathy with the life and hard times of their Eastern brethren.

Well, it is true that their life is still not especially agreeable. The political pressures on the citizen of the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* have not been relaxed in the last two years, they have become even severer. It is not only the survivors of the old *Bürgertum* whose elbow-room is being steadily narrowed; the new social élite and the intelligentsia (with all its economic privileges) are to-day subjected to stricter ideological supervision. Two years ago I spent an evening in Leipzig with two East German scientists and neither made any secret of the fact that he was in "opposition to the régime"; but both assured me that as far as their academic life was concerned they had no particular difficulties. Since then both have been removed from their university chairs for "political unreliability." The more prominent of the two fled to the West; the other was lucky enough to find a job in the research laboratory of a large industrial concern.

The growing "purge" of the universities and scientific institutions—until recently the refuge of what the Germans under both dictatorships have come to call the *"innere Emigration"* (the "internal emigration")—is only one symptom among many of the way in which the Ulbricht régime is gradually but implacably tightening up the screws wherever they had (for various practical reasons) been left loose. Nothing reveals this better than the increasing intervention of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the affairs of the schools and colleges; even in the ideologically irrelevant faculties, following the party line counts for more than competence, although here and there I could still find oases where scholars with "bourgeois" views were still able (for the time being) to keep their posts.

This is what is happening among the top intellectual echelons, and the pressure lower down is more fierce. Employees in "People's Factories" whom I have been meeting for years on my brief excursions into the zone, and whose fair and unemotional judgment I have come to value, assured me that in the last year there has been a striking increase in espionage by the *Staatssicherheitsdienst* (SSD); more and more frequently, workers, housewives, pensioners have been arrested and brought before the courts for "critical remarks"; they are to serve the rest of the population as examples of the risks of expressing discontent. This is less noticeable in the large cities than in the many small- and medium-sized industrial towns characteristic of East (really central) Germany. There it is far more difficult (than, for example, in Leipzig) to talk freely with a casual acquaintance in the *Kneipe* or the *Bahnhof* waiting-room. People have become more cautious, and even grumbling is done in half-hints and suggestions, which can, when necessary, be innocently explained away.

IF THE political pressure has grown more and more severe, economic pressure has been substantially relaxed. The conventional picture of the *Ostzone* and its "everyday greyness" is becoming less and less true. Of course, Eastern Germany has not gone through an "economic miracle" of its own; life is far from openness and ease. Still, on each visit I cannot help noticing—even on the streets—a further improvement in material conditions; there are signs of a slow, painful, but steady advance; since 1957 (when I was last here), the rate of advance seems to me to have become faster. The supply of goods is unmistakably larger and more attractive; there is a greater variety of food, textiles, furniture, and even (though only in modest quantities) luxury articles. Besides, the various governmental price-reductions are beginning to show results: in restaurants, for example, meals are not nearly so good as in the "golden West," but they are no longer noticeably dearer, and if manufactured goods still seem excessively expensive, they are better value than before; not only have their prices gone down, but the quality has improved.

Far more than on my last visit I was struck by the shops. The window displays are in good taste, and here and there show imagination. That, too, is a sign of greater plenty. When only essentials could be bought—and even those not always—all the efforts of the régime to improve what is oddly referred to as *"Verkaufskultur"* made little headway; but where there is variety and choice, the consumer wants to be attracted, amused, even seduced. These are, of course, only pleasant externals, and they do not eliminate shortages. Every now and again the simplest necessities of everyday life just disappear. Sometimes there are no potatoes; sometimes butter vanishes from the shops for days (or weeks). The machinery of distribution, planned in a detailed over-bureaucratic way, and treating all consumers as submissive subjects, is still unable to take the place of the "capitalist" market-mechanism; time and again it simply breaks down at one point or another. After more than ten years it has still not mastered the art of ensuring a smooth flow of goods from the producer to the consumer (not to speak of adapting itself to the buyer's requirements). And now, as before, I have heard the usual complaints about the wretched quality of this or that commodity. Shoes, for example: a consignment of West German shoes, and not the best either, turned up in Leipzig a few weeks ago; they were put on sale, the shops were jammed, and there was a literal pitched-battle among the customers at the sales-counters. . . .

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Still, this kind of thing is no longer the rule. By and large supplies have reached a decent level; and that means that the consumer does not feel quite so helpless and forlorn, even when some of his needs remain unsatisfied. He does not have to snap up everything offered him simply because it's there to be bought and there is no more reasonable way of spending his East-Marks. Now that the worst deficiencies have been made up, there is some point in putting money aside and waiting for something better to turn up (and to-day *"günstig"* does not mean cheaper, but something of quality). Demands rise with the standard of living just as much in the "socialist" *Ostzone* as in the "capitalist" West.

People in the "DDR" are not only better fed and better clad than at any time since the end of the war; there is also some prospect that in time they will have better housing. Not only in Leipzig which, because of the Fair, is a favoured city; but elsewhere in Saxony and the central German industrial region, new buildings are springing up. Everybody complains bitterly about the "tortuous slowness," and I did re-visit one housing project—still unfinished—which I had seen under scaffolding two years before. Still, the new blocks are there. As a rule they have the same sober and uncosy appearance that "social housing" has in West Germany; if anything, they are a bit drearier. Now and again you see signs of readiness to tread new paths; a few of the buildings would show up well even in West Germany, with bright balconies bringing a touch of colour and a hint of cheerfulness into the sad greyness of the suburbs. They seem to have abandoned the cold and showy pomposity of East-Berlin disastrous *Stalin-Allee* and the only slightly less unattractive *Ring* in Leipzig. Really to build "places to live in" is now clearly considered more important than the absurd ostentation on which so much labour and material were stupidly squandered.

All this means that the poor relations, the *"armen Verwandten"* in the East, are no longer quite so poor; they are getting on. It isn't prosperity, and real comforts are few, but Eastern-Germany is no longer that vast slum which a few years ago it seemed to be to the visitor.

IT WOULD not be surprising if the unmistakable and indisputable economic progress made in the Soviet zone of Germany had cut the ground from under the opposition to the Communist régime imposed on the country. But in point of fact there is scarcely any sign that hostility to the State has died down. The Party, the "SED," remains profoundly unpopular, even if meals are better, and wardrobes fuller, and radio and TV available. I sensed a certain new East-German pride in achievement, but I am afraid that the régime simply does not benefit; and all the official propaganda which attempts to deduce from the material improvements proof of "the superiority of socialism" seemed to me to draw a complete blank. People simply do not believe it.

It might perhaps be different if there were any comparable loosening, however slow and gradual, of the political straitjacket. But no sign of that. On the contrary: the State and the Party are interfering more and more in personal life, the "social" demands made on the individual are greater—for as the economic position of its citizens improves, the total State is making its totalitarian claims more emphatic. And this is resented all the more keenly because the rising standard of living is provoking the same reaction in the East as it once did in the West, namely, a growing need for relaxation. Now, when after years of privation the first fruits of their labours can be tasted, people want the peace and leisure to enjoy them; and it is precisely this which the system grudges its citizens, now more than ever before. It is precisely now that it fears they will stray into "bourgeois" paths. To meet this danger it has no other resource than to step up its claims on the individual, to give him less elbow-room, less time for himself, just when he feels the need for them most acutely. And so, by its own totalitarian misconduct it destroys its own chances of "winning the masses," or at least of conciliating them.

BUT that is only one aspect of the complex, intricate psychological process now at work in the *Ostzone*. For if, on the one hand, detestation of the SED régime is undiminished, on the other there is the growing recognition that there are no calculable prospects of getting rid of that régime. Communist rule is disliked more than before (if that is possible) because it is felt as more oppressive, but at the same time the illusions which up to now gave confidence to its opponents have been lost.

True, even two years ago I met many in the zone who doubted whether *Wiedervereinigung* (Reunification), which was their longing and their dream, was really possible. Since then these doubts have consolidated into a gloomy certainty (and more especially among the most alert and clear-headed) that the division of Germany can no longer be changed. A feeling of powerlessness is spreading. For more than a decade an unrelenting inner resistance to the régime was maintained. The opposition, deprived of hope, is declining into resignation.

The attitude to the West is also changing. Was it ever so unambiguous as it often appeared to the outsider? Elements of discontent and resentment were always, I am sure, mingled with the admiration and the hope. And if to-day the poor relations feel less ill-at-ease with their rich and prosperous Western cousins, the political expectations in the free world have also disappeared. Never before have I found so many who will admit, however reluctantly, their belief that the Russians—*"der Russe,"* as he is called in the contemporary grammar of politics—have the upper hand in the great world duel, that they have the longer reach, and that it would therefore be sensible to give up waiting for the "day of liberation."

A young taxi-driver with whom I talked reduced this to the formula that the Americans are *"zu weich"* (too soft), and said it without bitterness, as a simple statement of fact. And the same theme cropped up again and again in countless talks: the West should be firmer, more resolute, more unyielding. Behind the words I sensed the troubled conviction that the people in Bonn and Washington were neither physically nor intellectually the equal of their opponents in Moscow.

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Precisely because of this resignation, I think, the Western speculations about the possible consequences of a new popular East-German rising to be completely off the track. A people rebels only when it believes that the rebellion makes sense. The great majority of the East-German population appear to have lost this belief. They came out on to the streets when they felt that the oppressor had become weak and unsure of himself. To-day he seems to them stronger than ever. The Leipzig worker who with glowing eyes spoke to me about the demonstrations of June 17th, 1953—to my astonishment he himself brought the conversation round to this subject—looked at me uncomprehendingly when I asked him, "Could there be another 17th June?" I shall not easily forget the tone in which he replied, "But we're not that stupid. . . ." (*Aber wir sind doch nicht dumm.*)

They are not that stupid. They are, on the contrary, very proud to "know what it's all about," to read the signs of the times. "Believe me, *der Russe* will never get out of here of his own free-will," a student from Thuringia said to me. "Do you think we deceive ourselves about that?" No, they don't deceive themselves any longer in the Zone. From time to time, vague cloudy hopes spring up: Can the West let all this happen? Here and there resignation is transformed—and this struck me as something new—into the desperate pastime of weighing chances of a "military solution." But by and large they contemplate the future with a cool pessimism. They no longer expect things to change. "Just trying to get along," a girl student put it, shrugging her shoulders casually.

Here and there, too, I came across the first signs that some of those who no longer expect anything from the West are beginning, *innerlich*, to come to terms with the régime which they don't want but under which, for better or worse, they have to live. "Perhaps, after all, the Communists are right." I heard that only once, from an engineer who left me in no doubt about how unhappy he was with the thought. But I could not quite get rid of the idea that many others who cheerfully cursed the régime were coming around to ask themselves, quietly, desperately, whether after all Ulbricht and Grotewohl and their army of functionaries did not have, as they claimed, "the laws of history" on their side.

Is this simply the product of propaganda? Hardly. The astonishing resistance of the East-Germans to the indoctrination which dogs them at every turn continues to dumbfound me afresh on each visit. "Well, you know, in time we learn not even to hear it"—how often I've heard those words! This people has not only immunised itself against the slogans and speeches and banners; it has learned how not to see and hear. This was brought home to me by one surprising observation: not a single one of the many people with whom I talked showed the slightest reaction to any mention of *"Friedensvertrag,"* although for months the separate Peace Treaty has been the chief subject of a gigantic *agitprop* campaign pushed on every conceivable channel.

But they talk about Berlin. Will the road to Berlin —for them, when they need it, it is the escape route to the West—really be sealed off? That was the burning question. I found literally nobody, among old friends or new acquaintances, who failed to speak at once about this new anxiety. In theory, of course, we have known for a long time what the existence of a "free Berlin" means for these seventeen million. But only here (and only now, when the existence of that "island," that "lighthouse," seems threatened for the first time in ten years) does one really experience the desperate idealism. Leipzig was still decorated in Khrushchev's honour. Huge red banners flaunted slogans, in dozens of variations, about "West Berlin, Headquarters of War." But the people who read these words day after day think of West Berlin's cause as their own. It is difficult to imagine what they will feel if ever they had to take it as a "lost cause."

F. R. Allemann

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AUTHORS

Andrew Boyd *writes of himself:* "Born, aptly, Bournemouth. Studied Russian, oddly, Winchester; German, uneasily, in Germany and Czechoslovakia at Munich time. Four years in Asia during wartime army service. Escaped to India after Japanese capture of Singapore; experienced Bengal famine; married in Delhi. Ran pint-sized private army on Burma front; found Orde Wingate's remains after night march across Naga hills; filled in monsoon nights compiling *A Guide to 14 Asian Languages*. Rehabilitated into civilian life via mushroom publishers—soon liquidated—*Times Educational Supplement*, and B.B.C. Edited *United Nations News* 1948–50. Joined foreign staff of *The Economist* 1951, assistant editor 1954, now recognised as principal droll. Travelled Europe, Asia, America (North and South). Books include *Western Union* (apologies to Zane Grey and the cable company), *An Atlas of World Affairs* (now about to break into paperbacks with new edition). Incurable dabbler."

Edwin Muir's poems, which were found in his last notebook, will be included in a new edition of the *Collected Poems* which Faber have in preparation.

C. P. Snow is best known for his novel sequence *Strangers and Brothers*. He is Scientific Adviser to the Civil Service Commission.

Lady Caroline Freud is at present living in California.

Walter Z. Laqueur, who edits *Survey* in London, is the author of *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East*, and *Middle East in Transition*. He was recently Visiting Professor at Chicago University and Research Fellow at Harvard.

Raymond Williams is the author of *Culture and Society*.

Robert Brustein is a New York drama critic, and Professor of Dramatic Literature at Columbia University.

Martin Esslin's book on Berthold Brecht will be published by Eyre & Spottiswoode shortly.

Sylvia Sprigge was correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* in Italy before and after the war.

F. R. Allemann lives in Bonn and is the author of one of the best books on post-war Germany, *Bonn ist nicht Weimar*.

Philip Larkin, Librarian at Hull University, has published a book of poems, *The Less Deceived* (Marvell Press, who have also recorded them).

John Hatch is the Commonwealth Officer of the Labour Party and author of the just published *Everyman's Africa* (Dobson, 21s.).

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